THE MAHĀMUDRĀ

ELIMINATING THE DARKNESS OF IGNORANCE

THE NINTH KARMAPA
WANG-CH'UG DOR-JE

Commentary by
BERU KHYENTZE RINPOCHE

Translated and edited by
ALEXANDER BERZIN

LIBRARY OF TIBETAN WORKS & ARCHIVES

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A Guide to Ka-gyü Mahāmudrā and Guru-yoga

THE MAHĀMUDRĀ ELIMINATING THE DARKNESS OF IGNORANCE

by the Ninth Kar-ma-pa
Wang-ch'ug dor-je

with commentary given orally by
Beru Khyentze Rinpoche

and

FIFTY STANZAS OF GURU-DEVOTION

by *Aśvaghoṣa*

with commentary given orally by
Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey

translated from the Tibetan, edited and prepared by
Alexander Berzin

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First Edition : 1978
Second Edition : 1981
Third Revised Edition : 1989

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MAHENDRA SANSKRIT UNIVERSITY

Acc 29332/21938

ISBN 81-85102-13-9

Published by the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives,
Dharamsala, India, and printed at Indraprastha Press (CBT),
4 Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, New Delhi.

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Note from the Publisher

This publication is a continuation of the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives' programme of research, translation and publication of several works from original Tibetan sources. It is also a response to the growing demand for matters pertaining to ancient Tibetan traditions of the mind.

Translated, edited and prepared by Dr. Alexander Berzin of the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, it is hoped that the Ninth Karmapa's exposition together with Āryaśūra's fundamental work on approaching a spiritual teacher will lead readers not merely to the precepts of Buddhist insight, but also to its practical understanding and application.

Gyatsho Tshering
Director
Library of Tibetan Works & Archives

Feb., 1978

Bhattarai
30 July 1991

Contents

Preface vii

ONE : THE MAHĀMUDRĀ ELIMINATING THE DARKNESS OF IGNORANCE

Introduction 1

PART ONE : PRELIMINARIES 3
Refuge, Prostration and Bodhicitta 5
Vajrasattva Meditation 9
Maṇḍala Offering 12
Guru-yoga 16
Death and Impermanence 19
Karma and the Law of Cause and Effect 22
The Disadvantages of Saṁsāra 25
The Precious Human Rebirth 28
The Causal Condition for Success 30
The Main Condition 31
The Objective Condition 32
The Immediate Condition 33

PART TWO : MENTAL QUIESCENCE MEDITATION 35
The Essential Postures of Body and Mind 37
Focusing on a Visual Object 40
Other Sensory Objects 43
Eliminating Mental Dullness and Agitation 45
Focusing on No Object 48
Focusing on the Breath and the Three Stages of Settling the Mind 51
Eliminating Mental Tightness and Looseness 54
The Actual State of Mental Quiescence and the Three Boons 56

PART THREE : PENETRATIVE INSIGHT MEDITATION 61
Looking at the Settled Mind 63
Looking at the Moving or Thinking Mind 66
Looking at the Mind Reflecting Appearances and at the Mind in Relation to the Body 69
Looking at the Settled and Moving Minds Together 73
Recognising the Nature of the Settled Mind 76
Recognising the Nature of the Moving or Thinking Mind 81
Recognising the Nature of the Mind Reflecting Appearances and of the Mind in Relation to the Body 84
Recognising the Nature of the Settled and Moving Minds Together 89
Summary 93

PART FOUR : ENHANCING YOUR PRACTICE 95
Combining Mahāmudrā with Other Practices and the four Activities 97
The Five Distorted Views, Three Skills and Four Buddha Bodies 103
The Three Places Where You Can Deviate and the Four Where You Can Lose Voidness 108
The Danger Points Where Things Can Arise as an Enemy and Other Interferences 113
The Benefits of the Practices and the Stages and Paths According to Mahāmudrā 121
Concluding Definitions 134
Author's Colophon 140

TWO : FIFTY STANZAS OF GURU-DEVOTION 141
Preface 143
Text 148
Index 171

Preface

The mind is something that has intrigued mankind throughout the ages. What is it? How does it work? These are questions that have perenially been asked. Like a mirror, the mind is able to bear the image of all appearances and make them known, yet when you search for this mirror, it cannot be found—it is as if transparent. A clear, lucid awareness of objects, yet impossible to pinpoint: this is the mind.

Sometimes, however, the mind's mirror is fogged and everything is hazy. At other times it is clear and empty with nothing appearing, while at others it is churning with thoughts as if in a race. But whether it is a sight, a sound, a thought or whatever, there is nevertheless a quality of brilliant, yet unfindable, awareness pervading it that remains the same. When you are aware of it, you are not fooled into becoming disturbed over what appears in the mirror of your mind. You know its abiding nature and no matter what occurs, you are "calm and clear". But if you are unaware of what is actually happening with your mind and thoughts, the images in the transparent mirror become concrete and heavy, causing you anxiety, desires, fears and delusions. Insecure, not knowing what you are experiencing, you incur great suffering and uneasiness. Everyone around you is similarly confused and bewildered, and if you cannot pull yourself out of this state, how can you possibly help them out as well? The crucial point, then, is to know your own mind.

Mahāmudrā, or the "Great Seal", refers to a Mahāyāna Buddhist system of meditation on the nature of the mind and is undertaken for realizing Enlightenment—the complete elimination from the mind of all delusions and obstacles, and the total attainment in terms of it of all good qualities. In this state you have the maximum ability to benefit others. In order to attain it and fully know your mind, however, you must train yourself first with preliminary practices. These provide the context for your spiritual path as well as the conducive circumstances for your success in travelling it.

First you must realise how fortunate you are to have been born as a human with the leisure, freedom and opportunity to cultivate yourself. Not everyone has such a chance and while you have it you should not waste your time on trivial, ultimately meaningless matters. Death will arrive all too soon, and if you have not trained and come to know your own mind, it will be a pitiful, frightening experience. Friends, wealth, affluence and so forth will provide you no help and bring you no comfort. But if you have thought about karma, or the law of cause and effect, and how what you do affects your future rebirths, you will have spent this life being a kind person. You can then be assured that having brought happiness to others in the life now ending, you will be born into favourable circumstances in the future. Therefore you will be able to die with your mind at ease.

But, no matter where or to whom you are born, life under the influence of karma and delusions is subject to the sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death. Whether you are a god, an emperor, a beggar, an animal or in a hell, your wishes for happiness and not to suffer will always be frustrated by your craving desires, anger and closed-mindedness. Therefore you must renounce such unsatisfactory existence, known as saṁsāra, and strive to overcome being compulsively driven by the deluded instincts obscuring the pure nature of your mind. You must seek Liberation.

Further, you should consider how you are not alone in this frustrating predicament. Everyone wishes to be happy and cannot tolerate pain. Even the tiniest insect runs in terror when you try to catch it. Remembering how your happiness and well-being are dependent on others and how unfair it would be for you alone to be happy while everyone around you was miserable, you should develop love and compassion for others. When you assume the responsibility to help them and examine your capability to do so, you see that only if you completely rid yourself of all shortcomings and gain every good quality will you truly be able to benefit others. In this way you develop an Enlightened Motive, or Bodhicitta, with which you wish to attain Enlightenment as quickly as possible in order to liberate everyone from their sufferings. It is with this motive, then, that you train yourself in moral discipline, concentration and discriminating awareness in order to eliminate delusion, ignorance and compulsive behaviour and thus attain your goal.

Before you can actively begin such training, it is necessary to purify yourself of your grossest obstacles and accumulate some merit so that you will have less hindrances and more chance of success. Therefore under the close guidance of a Guru or spiritual master you engage in the preliminary practices (ngöndro).[1] By prostrating while taking refuge, you humble your pride and affirm your commitment to the Three Precious Gems. These three are the Buddhas or enlightened beings, the Dharma or their teachings and the Sangha or spiritual community of those who realise them. In other words, you confirm to yourself that you will work to attain the state of a Buddha by practising the teachings with the support of like-minded friends and that this is indeed your refuge from uncontrolled, meaningless, frustrating cyclic existence. And you humble yourself to this full dedication through prostration. The suffering involved cleanses you of many negativities.

The next preliminary, Vajrasattva meditation, likewise is a purification practice. Mandala offering is symbolic of completely giving yourself, and in fact the entire universe, to the goal of Enlightenment. It accumulates great merit or positive energy directed towards this aim. The final preliminary is Guru-yoga whereby you firmly establish your link with your personal Guru and those of his lineage. It is through them that you actually receive the teachings and only by following their instructions perfectly will you be able eventually to benefit all others.

Having completed these preliminaries and listened to and thought about your Guru's instructions, you then engage in intensive meditation to develop mental quiescence (śamatha) and penetrative insight (vipaśyanā). The former is the achievement of single-minded concentration in which you reach the mind's basic or natural level of blissful, clear, bare awareness, free from mental dullness, agitation and wandering. Penetrative insight is into Voidness or the true, transparent-like nature of reality in terms of this pure, mirror-like mind. With the joint achievement of both, you eliminate the darkness of ignorance that had been obscuring your realisation of what had been the case all along. By familiarising yourself with your innate, pure, pristine awareness of reality, coupled with an Enlightened Motive, you eventually become a totally awakened being, a Buddha, with the full ability to help others.

The Mahāmudrā teachings were taught by Buddha manifesting in the form of Vajradhāra. Their lineage in India passed from Tilopa to Nāropa and was brought to Tibet by the great translator Mar-pa. He, in turn, gave them to Mi-la rä-pa, famous for having achieved Enlightenment during his lifetime through his Guru-devotion and intensive practices. From Jetzün Mi-la rä-pa, they passed to Gam-po-pa, author of "The Jewel Ornament of Liberation", and from him to several of his disciples, including D'ü-sum ky'en-pa, the First Kar-ma-pa. Passing down through successive incarnations of Kar-ma-pas and their tutors and disciples, this particular lineage of Mahāmudrā known as Kar-ma Ka-gyü survives unbroken, currently headed by His Holiness the Sixteenth Kar-ma-pa, Rang-j'ung rig-päi dor-je.

The first text presented here, "The Mahāmudrā Eliminating the Darkness of Ignorance",[2] is one of the major treatises on this meditational system as practised by this lineage. It was composed by the Ninth Kar-ma-pa, Wang-ch'ug dor-je (1556–1603), who was noted for his lucid writings on the subject. The commentary appearing in smaller print interspersed throughout the root text was provided orally by the Third Jam-yang ky'entze wang-po Rinpoche, also known as Beru Khyentze Rinpoche, in accordance with the teachings of his Guru, His Holiness the Sixteenth Kar-ma-pa.

Beru Khyentze Rinpoche taught the text in Tibetan, from a personal, hand-written manuscript copy, to a group of forty Westerners at a Mahāmudrā meditation course conducted at Bodh Gaya, India, between December 1976 and January 1977. The teachings were compiled and edited by the translator after reconfirming difficult points with the Rinpoche.

In order to practise any Buddhist teachings, and especially those of Mahāmudrā and the advanced techniques known as the tantras, it is essential to have the close guidance of a Guru, otherwise it is very easy to go astray. But more than that, the Guru is the very heart and focal point of your practice through what is known as Guru-yoga and Guru-devotion. This is common to all traditions of Buddhism in Tibet and derives from India, most especially from the second text in this volume, "Gurupañcāśikā" or "Fifty Stanzas of Guru-devotion"[3] by Aśvaghoṣa of the first century B.C. It is the sourcebook of how to regard and behave with a Guru.

The role of the Guru in spiritual development is multi-levelled and faceted, and should not be underestimated. Take for instance his or her function in helping you recognise the nature of your own mind as a clear, blissful, void awareness of reality. The tantric approach to realising this abiding nature underlying all cognitions is to reveal it by peeling away the veiling denser levels of sensory consciousness, bodily elements and awareness, feelings, intellect, personality, subconscious preconceptions and so forth in a simulation of the death process. Such practices are potentially very dangerous unless you have expert guidance, and thus a fully qualified Guru is indispensable. With the sūtra level of the Mahāmudrā technique, you become aware of the nature of the mind without deliberately ceasing rougher levels of consciousness. Instead, you see right through them. But, this abiding nature is not at all obvious to the uninitiated and can easily be mistaken for something else, in which case meditation on it would be disastrous. It requires the expertise of an especially skilful and fully realised Guru working very closely and intimately with a disciple in order to make him or her be able to recognise from personal meditative experience the very nature of the mind. Thus on a functional and didactic level the Guru is crucial and is to be regarded as a Buddha showing you the way to Enlightenment. As a living example he keeps you from going to extremes of romanticism, dry intellectualisation and fantasy, and inspires you towards your goal. Moreover, your devotion and service to him accumulates the merit that will bring you spiritual success.

The more profound levels of Guru-yoga are indicated by Gam-po-pa, who succinctly said that when he realised the unity of his mind and his Guru, Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa—he could not see one without also seeing the other—he realised Mahāmudrā. The full implications of this are not easy to understand despite the obvious level of reference to the common practice of visualising your Guru in a classic form either before you, or above your head or in your heart.

Gurus act as a mirror of your mind. When you see them as having faults, these flaws are projections of cloudy delusions obscuring the pure nature of your own mind and mirror back to you what you must work on and learn about in order to gain Liberation.

This accords with some of the "Lo-jong" or "Training of the Mind" techniques of the Ka-dam Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism which Gam-po-pa had combined with the Mahāmudrā, namely taking the blame on oneself and giving the victory to others, and changing seemingly adverse conditions into positive ones conducive for practice.[4] When, on the other hand, you focus on your Guru's Enlightened State of a Buddha, your own innate pure state of mind is reflected and amplified, and this points the way to the Mahāmudrā experience.

All of this, however, is not to be taken simplistically to mean that your Guru only exists in your mind, or that you are your own Guru and there is no need for an outer one since external objects do not exist. He may not exist as a concrete, independent object "out there", but then again neither is he substantially the same as your mind with you being the only one who exists. Your Guru, who is neither a theoretical ideal, a golden idol nor an informal "buddy", but who rather is a real person whom it is totally valid to see as a Buddha, will show the way and act as a focus for you to gain a correct understanding of the nature of reality and the mind, mental labelling, appropriate and inappropriate bases for such, distorted and undistorted projections, the relation between imagining and non-conceptually realising perfection, and so forth. And you on your part must know how to relate to him or her respectfully and realistically both in meditation and "living" situations, in order to be able to attain Enlightenment. "Fifty Stanzas of Guru-devotion" presents the basics of how to enter into a proper relation with a Guru. Once you have done so, he or she will introduce you gradually, at your own speed, to the more profound levels of Guru-yoga and the mind.

The translation of the root text of "Fifty Stanzas of Guru-devotion" and the commentary appearing in smaller print, have been prepared from a teaching of Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey by the Translation Bureau of LTWA, formerly consisting of Sharpa Tulku, Khamlung Tulku, Jonathan Landaw and the editor. This explanation is based on the commentaries to the text written by Je Tzong-k'a-pa (1357–1419), the founder of the Ge-lug Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism,[5] and the First P'a-b'ong-k'a Rinpoche (1878–1943), the root Guru of the Senior and Junior Tutors of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

This volume on Guru-devotion and the Kar-ma Ka-gyü tradition of Mahāmudrā forms a part of the LTWA's programme to present representative translated works of the various Tibetan Buddhist lineages in order to preserve and further the wide diversity of teachings transmitted in Tibet.

It is hoped that this work will be of some small benefit to those who read and practise it.

Alexander Berzin
Dharamsala, India
December, 1977

Notes

1. For a detailed explanation of the preliminaries as practised by the Kar-ma Ka-gyu Tradition, cf. Jamgon Kongtrol, *The Torch of Certainty*, Judith Hanson, transl.(Boulder and London, Shambhala, 1977).
2. "Ch'ag-ch'en ma-rig mun-sel (*Phyag-chen ma-rig mun-sel*)".
3. "La-ma nga-chu-pa (*Bla-ma lnga-bcu-pa*)".
4. Cf. Geshes Rabten and Ngawang Dhargyey, *Advice from a Spiritual Friend*: Tibetan Teachings on Buddhist Thought Transformation (New Delhi, Publications for Wisdom Culture, 1977).
5. "*Bla-ma lnga-bcu-pa'i rnam-bshad slab-pa'i re-ba kun-skong*".
6. "*Khyab-dbag rDo-rje-'chang pha-bong-kha-pa dPal-bzang-pos Thun-drug bla-ma'i rnal-'byor-dang sDom-pa nyi-shu-pa Bla-ma lnga-bcu-pa sNgags-kyi rtza-ltung sbom-po bcas-kyi bshad-khrid gnang-ba'i zin-tho mdor-bsdus*'.

ONE:

THE MAHĀMUDRĀ ELIMINATING THE DARKNESS OF IGNORANCE

("Phyag-chen ma-rig mun-sel")

by the Ninth Kar-ma-pa Wang-ch'ug dor-je
with commentary given orally by
Beru Khyentze Rinpoche

Introduction

I make sincere obeisance to the precious Ka-gyü line. Although you attained perfect Enlightenment countless eons ago, you still manifest in whatever bodies are suited for taming those needing control. Hearing even your name eliminates the fears of saṁsāra.

Having prostrated to my Guru and his lineage, I shall say a little about Mahāmudrā, The Great Seal of Voidness, the innermost essence of the Diamond-hard Vehicle, Vajrayāna, in order to encourage disciples desiring Liberation. It is the single path all Buddhas have trod and has the undeclined warmth of blessings from the whispered oral teachings passed down successively from the Śākyamuni Buddha to my root Guru. The essence of the minds of all the Buddhas of the three times, it is a method for achieving in a single lifetime the extraordinary enlightened, unified state of Vajradhāra.

In order to listen to or study the Dharma teachings properly, it is essential to have the correct motivation. Remembering how all sentient beings have been your mothers in previous lifetimes and shown you great kindness, you should develop compassion and the wish to repay them. The only way to be able truly to do this and remove their suffering is to become enlightened yourself. To have as your primary thought the wish to become a Buddha or, as in the tantras, Vajradhāra, in order to help others is known as the Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta. Therefore with this highest motivation you should read, study and practise these teachings.

In addition, there are three faults along the analogy of vessel that you should eliminate. First, do not be like an upside-down vessel, that is closed-minded, so that the teachings do not penetrate. Nor should you be like one with a hole in the bottom, retaining nothing of what you learn. Furthermore, unlike a dirty vessel, you should be free of prejudices, preconceptions and strong delusions which might contaminate your mind-stream causing you to be pre-occupied and misconstrue all you hear.

There are also six stains to be removed. The first is pride or closed-minded arrogance; you must listen humbly if you are to learn anything. If you have no faith or are hypercritical, you will be unreceptive. If you are disinterested, you lack motivation and thus need to reconfirm it. Do not be distracted by sense objects such as noise or crowds, but remain focused on the teachings. However, do not let yourself sink into such a deep concentration that you no longer pay attention and are inalert. Such concentration has its place in meditation, but can be a hindrance when listening or studying. Finally, do not indulge yourself in depression or become discouraged if you do not understand at first reading. It will take time and the power of acquaintance.

Further, there are five types of incorrect grasping. Do not grasp only the words of the teachings and ignore their meaning, nor only the meaning but not the words. Nor should you consider both the words and their meaning equally unimportant. Also do not grasp at either an incorrect order of the teachings or at a wrong understanding. If you regard yourself as a sick man, suffering from delusions, the Guru as your doctor and the teachings as medicine, you are sure to benefit.

Part One:

PRELIMINARIES

Refuge, Prostration and Bodhicitta

The explanation of how to practise this Mahāmudrā of the undeclined lineage of the precious Ka-gyü is divided into three sections: the preliminaries, the actual body of the practice and the concluding material.

For the first of these, there is to start with going for refuge and developing an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta.

There are both common and extraordinary preliminary practices. The common are to meditate on the precious human rebirth, death and impermanence, karma or the law of cause and effect, and the disadvantages of saṁsāra or cyclic existence. As a common-ground, they form the context for all Buddhist practice and help set your motivation. The extraordinary preliminaries (ngön-dro) are prostration while taking refuge, Vajrasattva purification, maṇḍala offering and Guru-yoga.

There are many styles in which the latter set may be practised, but the most usual is to perform 100,000 repetitions of each in turn in one continuous effort. Another method is to do a certain portion of each every day as part of your daily practice. The number of repetitions may vary and sometimes you are told to keep count, while at others not, but to continue until you receive signs of success. The set may be repeated several times on different occasions or continued at a slower pace throughout your life. Furthermore, the actual practices you do as preliminaries may vary as well. Your Guru will decide what is best for you. What follows is a general description of the standard preliminaries as practised in the Kar-ma Ka-gyü lineage. The specific, detailed instructions should be received from your Guru.

The purpose of preliminaries is to eliminate or purify yourself of the obstacles that might hinder your practice and to accumulate the merit that will bring you success. Prostration and Vajrasattva meditation accomplish the former, while maṇḍala offering and Guru-yoga the latter. Thinking about the law of cause and effect and about all the non-virtuous actions you have committed in the past and how you will have to experience suffering as their result, you should feel great regret and turn to the Three Jewels for refuge. These are the Buddhas or Fully Awakened Beings, the Dharma or their teachings and the Saṅgha or spiritual community of those who realise them. Entrusting yourself to these three, you should offer prostration in order to cleanse yourself of unripened suffering.

Furthermore, you should realise how all sentient beings want only happiness and never to suffer, but are unaware of how to bring this about. They do not know that virtuous, kind actions bring happiness, while cruel, non-virtuous ones only pain. Therefore develop compassion for them and wish by our practice to purify them as well. And finally you should set your motivation as Bodhicitta, the Enlightened Motive, wishing that by taking refuge and prostrating you will eliminate all obstacles so that you can attain the enlightened state of a Buddha in order truly to be able to benefit all others.

In the space before you visualise a wish-granting tree with one trunk and dividing into five branches. On the central one is your Guru (in the form of Vajradhāra), in front are the meditational deities, to his right the Buddhas, behind him Dharma scriptures and to his left the Saṅgha. Each is surrounded by a cluster of figures of his own class. You should go for refuge (prostrating while) saying the appropriate verse and visualising yourself surrounded by a multitude of all motherly sentient beings with yourself in front as their leader and all of them joining you in a chorus taking refuge.

This visualisation is of the field of merit or tree of assembled Gurus. Imagine around you is a beautiful park, with soft grassy meadows and gentle animals. In the centre of an exquisite lake is a wish-granting tree as described above. Vajradhāra or, Tibetan Dor-je ch'ang, is the form Buddha takes in the tantras. The meditational deities (yidams) include Vajrayoginī, Heruka and so forth; the Buddhas are those of the past, present and future; the Dharma is represented by the scriptural texts of

"The Three Baskets (Tripiṭaka)" and the Saṅgha by such Bodhisattvas as Avalokiteśvara and Tārā, as well as Pratyekabuddhas and Śrāvakas such as Śāriputra and so on. Around the lower portion of the tree are the Dharmapālas and protectors such as Mahākāla. If you do not know what all these figures look like or cannot visualise them clearly, do not worry. At least have faith that they are there before you. Through familiarity and pictures you will learn to see them.

Visualise yourself in your ordinary form, with all your male relatives to your right and female to your left. Imagine you are in an enormous crowd of people and animals, yourself as their leader, and all prostrating and taking refuge. Prostrate by touching clasped hands—palms together, fingers outstretched and thumbs tucked in—to the top of your head, mid-brow, throat and heart, then go down to the ground and stretch out fully with hands extended before you. Arise quickly. Do this while repeating such verses as "I and all motherly sentient beings as vast as space... go for refuge in the holy venerable Gurus. We go for refuge in the Yidams and host of their maṇḍala deities. We go for refuge in the Blessed Buddhas. We go for refuge in the Holy Dharma. We go for refuge in the Noble Saṅgha. We go for refuge in the host of Ḍākas, Ḍākinīs, Dharmapālas and protectors who have the eye of pristine awareness." Throughout maintain a strong state of concentration, faith and sincerity. These three—bowing, reciting and concentrating—are known as physical, verbal and mental prostration. You should repeat the verse and physical prostration 100,000 times, as well as begin any meditation session with at least seven.

When prostrating you will experience much suffering. View this like the pain of an injection you are happy to endure in order to be cured of an illness. Your discomfort is proportionate to the amount of unripened suffering and negative karma you are being cleansed of. When you ache, feel that you are not only eliminating, by experiencing now, the suffering you might have had in a more severe form in an unfortunate rebirth, but also that you are taking away this suffering from others. If you are hot or cold, pray that this eliminates that which the hell creatures feel. Take hunger and thirst from hungry ghosts and, if your mind becomes dull and blank with fatigue, imagine that animals are freed from their stupidity. With strong faith and constantly reconfirmed motivation, you will have no doubts about what you are doing. Should thoughts arise to leave it and do something else, regard them as a jeering crowd and pay them no heed.

You should also recite, "(I go for refuge until I am enlightened) to the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Highest Assembly..." and so forth while thinking, "Realising that all beings have been my mother and father, I shall go for refuge and develop an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta." In addition you should meditate on the four immeasurables, "May all sentient beings be endowed with happiness and the causes for joy..." and so forth.

The stanza, "I go for refuge until I am enlightened to the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Highest Assembly. From the virtuous merit that I collect by practising giving and other perfections, may I attain the state of a Buddha to be able to benefit all sentient beings", is the most commonly recited one for enhancing your development of Bodhicitta. The four immeasurables are (1) love, wishing all beings to be endowed with happiness and the causes for joy, (2) compassion, wishing them to be parted from suffering and the causes for grief, (3) joy, wishing them never to be parted from the happiness they have and (4) equanimity, wishing that they be freed from all attachment and repulsion and from all notions of some being close and others distant.

At the conclusion you should meditate that the objects of refuge melt into light and dissolve into you and that your mind-stream has thus been purified.

When you have finished your prostration session, dissolve all the figures into the central one of your Guru as the Buddha Vajradhāra and finally him into yourself. Remain in a non-objectifying state of inseparable Voidness and clarity, not directed at any extreme mode of existence. In other words, do not make anything into a concrete, truly existent object. Rather, remain in the here and now, and feel you are completely purified.

That is the first (preliminary practice), the meditations for going for refuge and developing an Enlightened Motive.

Vajrasattva Meditation

Vajrasattva, or in Tibetan Dor-je sem-pa, is a form of the Buddhas dedicated to purifying and eliminating from others suffering, sickness and the unripened, unfortunate consequences of their previously committed non-virtue. He appears in many forms, peaceful or as Heruka Vajrasattva, either alone or with consort. His practice can be either more or less elaborate. What follows is a purification method with the solitary Vajrasattva.

On the crown of your head (visualise) your Guru as Vajrasattva, white in colour, with right hand holding a vajra sceptre at his heart and left holding a bell at his hip, and arrayed with the major and minor marks of a Buddha.

On the top of your head in your ordinary form visualise a syllable PAṀ. This transforms into a white lotus and on it, from a syllable ĀḤ, appears a flat, full-moon disc. On top of it, a syllable HŪṀ transforms into a five-pointed vajra or diamond sceptre marked in the centre with a HŪṀ. Light rays are emitted and re-absorbed twice, the first time making offerings to the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the second eliminating the suffering of all beings. The vajra then transforms into the solitary Vajrasattva, as described above. His left leg is on top of his right thigh and his right leg is extended downwards. In his heart is a moon disc with an upright, white syllable HŪṀ in its centre,

Vajrasattva has both a hundred and a six-syllable mantra and they may be arranged in several ways, either clockwise or counter-clockwise, revolving or stationary. In this particular meditation, his hundred-syllable mantra, which you will be repeating 100,000 times, is arranged counter-clockwise along the outside rim of the moon-disc in his heart. The letters are white, upright, facing inwards and do not revolve.

After meditating like this, you should recite, "O Guru-Vajrasattva, please cleanse me of all obstacles and unripened, unfortunate consequences of my previously committed non-virtuous actions." In addition, you should apply the (four) various (opponent powers) of declaring your previous non-virtue.

> For this meditation to be most effective it must be complete with the four opponent powers used in confession or declaring your previously committed non-virtuous actions. First you must recall all your mistakes and feel sincere regret. The second is promising to try your hardest not to repeat them. Next you must rely on the basis or object against which your non-virtue has been committed, namely your commitment to the refuges and Bodhicitta. Thus by again taking refuge and enhancing your Enlightened Motive, you reinforce the foundation for your morality. Lastly you apply such purifying practices as those of Vajrasattva to remove all stains. If these four are incomplete, whatever purification you do will be only a temporary whitewashing. But with these four opponents and sincere conviction in their ability to cleanse you, there is no doubt they will work.

Then visualise white nectar falling from the large toe of Vajrasattva's (right) foot, entering through the crown of your head and filling your entire body. All your obstacles and unripened consequences leave you and in their place you are entirely filled with nectar.

As you recite the hundred-syllable mantra, white lights and purifying nectars are emitted from the moon-disc, seed-syllable HŪṀ and mantra at his heart, completely filling his body, overflowing and entering you as above. Imagine that from the pores and orifices of your body obstacles and unripened, unfortunate consequences leave in the form of soot and black tar, sickness and disease as pus, blood, mucous and snot, and the harmful influence of malevolent spirits as snakes, scorpions, spiders and insects. All these dissolve into the ground and in their place you are filled with white nectar and lights. Visualise this same process occurring for all sentient beings around you, with either each having his own Vajrasattva on the crown of his head or everyone sharing one large figure.

Pleased, your Guru (Vajrasattva) melts into light (and dissolves into you). You should meditate that your body, speech and mind and those of Vajrasattva have inseparably mixed and that you have been cleansed of all obstacles and unripened, unfortunate consequences. That is the second (preliminary practice): Vajrasattva meditation and mantra recitation.

Maṇḍala Offering

Offerings in general are not made in order to please or bribe the object to whom they are presented. They are a symbol of your total dedication to Enlightenment as represented by the Gurus and Three Jewels of Refuge, and are offered in order to gain the merit that will bring you to their state. When you plant crops in a field, it is not the ground that benefits, but you yourself. Likewise, making offerings to the assembled Gurus as the field of merit brings you to Enlightenment so that you can benefit all.

There are many types of maṇḍalas. One classification is the celestial mansions in which the meditational deities dwell. These are three-dimensional structures, the ground-plans of which are depicted in maṇḍala paintings. Another type is the one used in offerings, consisting of a plate-like base, rings, a crown and rice, grain or jewels and is symbolic of the universe.

You should meditate that (before you) is a maṇḍala mansion with five clusters of figures within. In the centre is your Guru (as Vajradhāra), before him the meditational deities, to his right the Buddhas, behind him the Dharma scriptures and to his left the Saṅgha. This is the maṇḍala realised before you.

In general, maṇḍala mansions are square with a ground floor and steeple-like structure. In the centre of each wall is a door, entrance-corridor, porch and archway, the latter of which is flanked on top by two deers and a Dharma wheel. The exact architectural structure and proportions differ slightly for each meditational deity and can be very complex.

In the centre of such a transparent building, made of light and visualised before you, is your Guru in the form of Vajradhāra. He is on a throne supported by lions with a lotus and moon-cushion seat. Above him are all the lineage Gurus, from Vajradhāra himself through Tilopa, Nāropa and so forth down to his own root Guru. Around him are four groups of figures as above, similar to the refuge and prostration visualisation. This is your field of merit to whom you make offerings.

Then construct another maṇḍala with its mounds and offer it with the stanza "...a maṇḍala built on a base resplendent with flowers, saffron water and incense..." and so forth, along with the rest of the maṇḍala procedures. Thus you should present both actual material offerings and mentally created ones.

With a standard maṇḍala offering set, first hold the baseplate and wipe it clean while reciting once Vajrasattva's hundred-syllable mantra to purify defilements. Next put a drop of water on it to signify your Bodhicitta motivation and the moisture of your compassion. Then placing the first ring on the base, add mounds of rice, grain and so forth in the appropriate directions for each of the places, treasures and goddesses mentioned until all the rings are filled and it is crowned with the jewelled top. This is the actual material offering done while reciting the appropriate stanzas.

The mentally created one is your visualisation as described by these stanzas. What you are offering is the entire universe and all its wealth as portrayed by Buddha in the Abhidharma teachings. Buddha described the universe differently on separate occasions to varying people, since depending on your state of purity you see things differently. According to this particular description, there is the golden earth or base with an iron ring or fence around its perimeter and a salt-water ocean on the outside. On the inside of the fence, one in each cardinal direction, are the four continents each with two subcontinents between it and the fence, all separated by oceans. On the other side of the continents, progressively closer to the centre are alternating rings of seven golden mountains and seven fresh-water lakes. In the centre itself is Mount Meru, square, stūpa-shaped, with four steps or levels going up from the bottom. Its eastern face is of white crystal, southern of blue aquamarine, western of red ruby and northern of green emerald. The ocean and sky in each direction are of the corresponding colour. The eastern continent and sub-continents are half-moon shaped with flat edge towards Mount Meru; the southern are curved trapezoids, with concave sides, concave longer top away from Mount Meru and convex shorter bottom near it; the western are circular and the northern square.

Human life, as we know it, is found on the southern continent, where the oceans and sky are blue. The other continents should not be thought of as places in outer space which can be reached by rocket ship. You can only go there if you have accumulated the karma for such a rebirth.

The verse you repeat 100,000 times for this preliminary is, "By directing to the Fields of Buddhas this offering of a maṇḍala built on a base resplendent with flowers, saffron water and incense, adorned with Mount Meru and the four continents, as well as with the sun and the moon, may all sentient beings be led to these Fields."

By the force of such offerings, you complete your two collections (of merit and insight) and receive the blessings to develop sublime experiences and insights. Having made requests for such (blessings), you should think that the host of deities in the maṇḍala realised before you melt into light and dissolve into you. In this way you complete the two collections.

By presenting to the pure objects in the maṇḍala realised before you both the material offering of the maṇḍala set and the visualised universe, you accumulate merit. By doing so while meditating on the non-objectifying state of Voidness with respect to the offerings, you accumulate insight. By the force of these two collections you overcome the two sets of obstacles, those preventing Liberation and Omniscience. The collection of merit results in your attainment of the Form Bodies of a Buddha, and that of insight in the Wisdom Bodies. The Form Bodies are the Emanation (Nirmāṇakāya) and Utility Bodies (Sambhogakāya). The former appear to ordinary beings with the karma to see them, while the latter only to Ārya Bodhisattvas, that is those with an Enlightened Motive who have bare perception of Voidness. The Wisdom Bodies are the Nature (Svabhāvakāya) and Wisdom-Truth Bodies (Dharmakāya). According to this text, the former is the Omniscient mind of a Buddha and the Voidness of that mind, while the latter is the inseparability of the former three. The definitions, however, of these last two bodies are more often reversed and sometimes Dharmakāya is used alone as a general term for both. Moreover, there are many other levels on which the various Buddha bodies can be understood and defined.

That is the third (preliminary practice): applying effort in the instructions for the maṇḍala offering.

Guru-yoga

The last of the extraordinary preliminaries, also for accumulating merit and blesssings, is Guru-yoga. For this, you should visualise yourself in the form of a meditational deity. Any will do, but usually Vajrayoginī is chosen. She is red, has one face, two arms, two legs and stands on one leg, with her left foot on top of a lotus, corpse and sun-disc, and her right foot bent upwards towards her left thigh. She holds in her right hand a butcher's cleaver above her head and in her left a skull-cup at her heart. A khatvanga-staff rests on her left shoulder. With yourself in this form, proceed with the practices.

You should meditate that on the crown of your head is your root Guru, either in his own bodily form or in the aspect of a meditational deity, whichever you prefer. You should meditate either that all the (lineage) Gurus going back to Vajradhāra are stacked one atop the other above his head or that they are all clustered around him. You should make requests to them very strongly and for a long time with immeasurable fervent regard, loving respect and extraordinary sincerity. When your attitude has changed (for the better), make it stable. Then all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Ḍākas, Ḍākinīs, Dharmapālas and protectors together with their entourage dissolve into your root Guru and you should meditate on your root Guru as incorporating and embodying them all.

As indicated above, there are many varieties of Guru-yoga—visualising your root Guru either in his own form, or as Vajradhāra, Mar-pa, Mi-la rä-pa, Gam-po-pa, Kar-ma-pa and so forth. Your Guru may tell you to choose Vajradhāra, in which case he would be on a lion-supported throne, lotus and sun-disc, surrounded by four clusters of figures and the lineage Gurus as in the refuge and maṇḍala visualisations. However, a solitary figure of your enthroned Guru surrounded by lineage Gurus will do, since your root Guru embodies all three refuges.

Make the outer, inner and secret offerings and offer the seven limbs of prayer.

Outer offerings are of the desirable objects of the senses, either materially arranged or mentally created. Inner ones are of the purified meats and liquids symbolic of the transformation of your delusions, aggregates and so forth. Secret offerings are of the circumstances for generating the blissful consciousness for the most powerful realisation of Voidness.

The seven limbs of prayer or seven-limbed pūja include (1) prostrating, (2) making offerings, (3) confessing or declaring your previous non-virtue, (4) rejoicing in the merit of others, (5) requesting the Gurus to teach, (6) beseeching them not to pass away and (7) dedicating your merit. An eighth limb of taking refuge is sometimes added between the second and third.

Strongly take refuge, enhance your Enlightened Motive and make requests with such verses as: "All motherly sentient beings equal in number to (the vastness of) space make requests to the Guru as the precious Buddha, ...as the all-pervasive Dharmakāya, ...as the Sambhogakāya of Great Bliss, ...as the compassionate Nirmāṇakāya..." and so forth.

Implied by the request to the Guru as the precious Buddhas is that he incorporates all Three Jewels of Refuge. His body stands for the Saṅgha, his speech the Dharma and his mind the Buddhas. Thus this verse is to the Guru as the body, speech and mind of the Buddhas, that is the Three Precious Gems, as well as to him as the three Buddha bodies. This may be repeated 100,000 times or, more usually, the following six-line verse of the First Kar-ma-pa is said that many times in addition to a million repetitions of the Kar-ma-pa mantra.

"I make requests to the precious Guru. Inspire me to clear my mind of grasping for true identities. Inspire me to develop on my mind-stream the insight to see all worldly thoughts as unnecessary. Inspire me that my non-Dharmic thoughts shall

> cease. Inspire me to realise my mind has no birth. Inspire me that my deceptive notions shall dissolve in their place. Inspire me to realise all appearances of existence as Dharmakāya."

Then your Guru dissolves into you and you should think that your Guru's body, speech and mind have become inseparably mixed with your own mind. Having done this, remain fixed in a state free from mental fabrications (of extreme modes of existence).

> At the conclusion of your recitation session, you should visualise your Guru granting you the four tantric empowerments as follows. First white light is emitted from his forehead to yours, eliminating the obstacles due to the non-virtuous actions of your body. It grants you the vase empowerment, permitting you to engage in the development stage practices, and plants the seed for your attaining the Nirmāṇakāya or Emanation Body of a Buddha.
>
> Red light is emitted from his throat to yours, eliminating the obstacles due to your non-virtuous speech. It grants the secret empowerment, permiting you to meditate on the completing stage practice involving the body's subtle energy system and plants the seed for the Saṁbhogakāya.
>
> Blue light from his heart to yours eliminates the obstacles due to mental non-virtue, grants the wisdom empowerment permitting you to engage in the practices of union, and plants the seed for the Dharmakāya.
>
> Finally white, red and blue lights are emitted from all three places simultaneously to yours, eliminating physical, verbal and mental obstacles all together, granting the word empowerment permitting you to practise Mahāmudrā or the completing stage without signs and planting the seed for the Svabhāvakāya.
>
> After all this, visualise that the lineage Gurus dissolve one into each other into your root Guru and that he dissolves into you. Remain in a non-objectifying state of Voidness and then dedicate the merit for the Enlightenment of all.

If you exert effort by relying on this method for gaining insights into Mahāmudrā, the Great Seal of Voidness, you will receive (the Gurus') blessings and inspiration. That is the fourth (preliminary practice): meditation on Guru-yoga.

Death and Impermanence

If you do not meditate on impermanence, you will not turn your mind away from concern for this life. If you do not turn your mind, you will not become liberated from saṁsāra, or cyclic existence. Concerning this (Nāgārjuna has said in his "Suhṛllekha"), "There are many things that can harm our life, for it is impermanent like a bubble on water that can be burst by the wind. It is a great miracle that after exhaling we take our next breath and after falling asleep we wake up again."

In general, all conditioned phenomena are impermanent and, specifically, the life force of sentient beings is impermanent like a bubble. You can never know when you will die. There is no certainty that you will not die right now. Moreover, at the time of death nothing except Dharma is of any help. If you work for meaningless worldly things or activities for this lifetime, you will be unable to pass beyond the causes for suffering. Therefore vow that whenever your mind wanders for even a moment towards thoughts of food, clothing and so forth for this lifetime, you will think about death.

All conditioned phenomena, that is those that depend on causes and circumstances, are impermanent. This includes both animate and inanimate objects, sentient beings and their environment. A solid structure today can crumble into dust tomorrow. In particular, your own life is extremely fragile and can be lost very easily. No one can guarantee he will be alive tomorrow and when your time is up, no friends, doctors, medicine, money or fame can prevent your death. The only thing that can help is the practice of Dharma. If you have accumulated many virtuous deeds during your life, you can die in peace assured that as a result of your white karma you will gain a fortunate rebirth.

Therefore do not be fooled into thinking that sensory pleasures can bring you lasting happiness. If you are attracted to beautiful sights, think how the moth is lured to his death by his enchantment with a flame. For sounds, consider how a duck is seduced by a hunter's duck-call. Bees are attracted to the smell of a Venus fly-trap and flies to that of feces, only to drown in a toilet. Fish are lured on to a hook by their desire for the taste of a worm. Elephants, obsessed with the physical sensation of scratching themselves, are led by their tame brethren between two thorny trees and thus are captured by trainers and taken into bondage. By thinking of these examples, turn your mind from concern for worldly pleasures, seeing that they are only causes for more suffering. Realising you may die at any moment, do not waste your time on trivial matters. Regard food and clothing as a condemned man would his final meal and costume.

You should count how many of your friends and relatives have passed away in their own time and think about the manner in which they died and how their corpse were taken to the cemetery and nothing remains of their body. (By thinking how) you too do not transcend such a nature, you should work yourself into a state of trembling fear like someone who has been placed into the hands of a hangman. Do not let your mind escape into mental wandering. When you have completely lost any interest in this life, meditate on this state becoming completely involved in it. This is the fifth (preliminary practice): meditation on death and impermanence.

These meditations are not designed to make you depressed. If their result were just the pessimistic anguish that "I am going to die and there is nothing I can do", then meditation would be only a cause for anxiety and suffering. The whole point of death meditation is to urge you into the practice of Dharma, into the consideration of karma and the law of cause and effect and how you can do something to affect your future rebirths. Thus meditation should spur you on like a fighter being pushed into an arena. As Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa said, "I went to the mountains because I feared death. But now that I see the true Dharmakāya nature of my mind, even if death comes I have no fears."

Karma and the Law of Cause and Effect

After this it is necessary not to be confused about what is to be adopted and abandoned with reference to karma and the law of cause and effect. The fruits of whatever actions are done by any living being ripen on that individual being himself. Moreover, if you commit the ten non-virtuous actions you are reborn in one of the unfortunate states of rebirth. Depending on which of the three poisons they are committed with, their frequency, who their object is and whether they are serious, middling or minor in nature, you are reborn either as a hell creature, hungry ghost or animal. Once you are born as such, you have to experience unfathomable suffering. Depending on whether you commit great, middling or slightly virtuous actions, you are reborn either in the Formless or Form Realms, or as a god in the Desire Realm. Therefore at all times examine (the actions you do through) the three gateways of your (body, speech and mind).

The basic facts of the law of cause and effect are that happiness results from virtuous actions or "white" karma and suffering from non-virtuous or "black" karma. Furthermore, whatever you do ripens on you alone; if you kill someone, the effect will not ripen on your parents or children, only on you. Therefore you must abandon cruel actions and adopt kind ones if you wish to benefit yourself and then others.

The ten non-virtuous actions are divided into three of the body, four of speech and three of mind. Those of the body are killing, taking what is not given or stealing, and indulging in improper sexual conduct such as adultery or rape. The four of speech are lying, using divisive language, speaking abusive and harsh words, and idly gossiping. The three of mind are having covetous thoughts to possess what belongs to others, harbouring ill-will, and holding distorted views such as disbelief in cause and effect.

The ten merely virtuous actions are to refrain from the ten non-virtuous ones. The ten especially virtuous ones, however, are saving others' lives, practising generosity, keeping strict morality and encouraging others to do likewise, speaking the truth without causing confusion, intermediating quarrels and reconciling enemies, talking sweetly and calmly, speaking meaningfully such as by teaching and praying, having few desires and knowing satisfaction, having good-will towards others and holding correct views with faith and conviction in the teachings.

If you save others' lives and refuse to kill, your own life will be longer, whereas if you persist in killing your life will be short and filled with disease. If you are generous and never steal, you will come into wealth. But if you rob you will be poor and always subject to theft. From strict morality and abandoning sexual misconduct you will have a pleasing appearance and good marital relations and friendships. But if you cause harm by your sexual behaviour, you will be ugly, have poor marriages and an unfaithful spouse.

By speaking the truth and never lying, others will believe what you say. But no one will heed or believe your words if you always lie. If you refrain from divisive language and try to bring people together, your relations with friends will always be close. However, if you cause divisions, you will accumulate enemies, be the focus of jealousies and have poor relations with others. From speaking pleasantly and never harshly, others will speak nicely to you. But you will only receive abuse and have to hear unpleasantness if you persist in cursing others. If you speak meaningfully and never gossip, you yourself will hear meaningful things; whereas if you continue to chatter idly, meaningless drivel is all you will hear.

If you are content and never covetous, you will never be in want of anything. But if you always covet your neighbour's possessions you will become a beggar always in want. By having good-will and no malice for others, people will treat you nicely and regard you well, whereas ill-will only brings you suspicion and harm from others. Lastly, if you hold correct, undistorted views, your intelligence and wisdom will increase and your mind will be ever sharp. However, from clinging to distorted ones you will be narrow-minded, dull-witted and filled with doubts.

The results of karma can be divided in many ways, such as that found in the text. Another way is in terms of the delusions motivating your actions. If you act under the strong influence of pride and arrogance, you will be reborn as a god; from jealousy an anti-god; desire a human; closed mindedness an animal; miserliness a hungry ghost; and from anger as a hell creature. Therefore try to eliminate the delusions and practise virtuous actions in order to become liberated from all six realms of cyclic existence or saṁsāra and ultimately to attain Enlightenment.

Whatever virtuous actions you do, try to increase and expand them. Whatever non-virtuous or unspecified actions you commit, try to eliminate and bring them to a halt. In other words, without being confused about what should be abandoned or adopted, engaged in or turned away from, break the streams of continuity of your non-virtuous actions and have the wheel of the virtuous actions of your three gateways be without any gaps. This is the meaning of Buddha's teachings and the aim of the practices, and you should act accordingly. Therefore once you have learned in great detail about what should be adopted and abandoned with respect to karma and the law of cause and effect, train yourself in this. That is the sixth (preliminary practice): the teachings of karma and the law of cause and effect.

The Disadvantages of Saṁsāra

After this, if you do not meditate on the disadvantages of saṁsāra or cyclic existence, you will not turn away from compulsive attraction to it, nor will you develop thoughts of renunciation. From such a situation, experiences and insight will not dawn in your mind-stream. Because you will be depriving yourself of your share of such dawnings, you must meditate on the suffering of saṁsāra in order to abandon it.

In connection with this, if sentient beings are reborn as hell creatures, they have such sufferings as those of the eight hot hells the eight cold hells, the neighbouring hells and occasional hells. Hungry ghosts have hunger and thirst. Animals have being killed and slaughtered. Humans have birth, old age, sickness and death. Gods have falling from their state and their consciousness being transferred. Anti-gods have quarrelling and fighting. Such are the sufferings peculiar to the six states of rebirth.

Moreover, the obvious suffering you experience is the suffering of misery. That which appears to be pleasure is the suffering of change. That which has a neutral feeling-tone is the all-pervasive suffering. Because you are uninterruptedly harmed by this last one, it does not matter which state of saṁsāra you are in. Even if you have attained the position of a universal cakra-emperor, Brahma or Indra and so forth, you have not transcended suffering. Therefore, with the conviction that saṁsāra is like a prison, a deep pit or a mass of flames, you should from now on continually, as much as possible, seek a method for becoming liberated from it.

Saṁsāra means "to circle", in other words to revolve continually through the cycle of birth, sickness, old age, death, then rebirth, sickness and so forth. It is propelled and perpetuated by ignorance and its mechanism described by the twelve links of interdependent origination. There are four methods of being born, namely from a womb, an egg, heat and moisture and by miraculous transformation. These bring you into one of the six rebirth states as a hell creature, hungry ghost, human, anti-god or god. The first five are in the Desire Realm and the gods span all Three Realms: the Desire, Form and Formless. But no matter where and how you are reborn, there is only suffering.

Each of the rebirth states has its own peculiar disadvantage as mentioned in the text. The three general sufferings of misery change and that which is all-pervasive and found throughout. The first is the obvious pain of sickness, old age and so forth. The suffering of change comes from seemingly pleasant things such as delicious food or a walk in the country which can turn into an upset stomach or blisters. All-pervasive suffering appears neutral or unobvious to ordinary beings, like the sensation of a piece of hair on your palm but is as sharp as a hair in your eye to Āryas with bare perception of Voidness. It is the suffering inherent in the fact of being born with contaminated aggregates which by their very nature are like a magnet attracting sickness, old age and death.

Meditating on all these disadvantages of saṁsāra, you should develop renunciation or the state of mind that wishes to be completely free of all suffering. This is the Hīnayāna motivation and with it an understanding of Voidness brings you Liberation. But to overcome not only the obstacles preventing Liberation, but those blocking Omniscience as well, you must go further. In addition to renunciation, you must develop an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta. Seeing that all beings experience the sufferings of saṁsāra and wish as you do for release from its bondage and to attain ultimate happiness, you should strive to attain Buddhahood in order to liberate both yourself and others. This motive gives the realisation of Voidness the added force that will bring you Enlightenment.

Even if you achieve the Liberation of a Hīnayāna practitioner, which is a state beyond this (saṁsāra), you have still not attained the state of ultimate happiness. Therefore you should try to achieve this peerless Enlightenment by all means. For this purpose then, with the certainty that all sentient beings without exception have been nothing but your mothers and fathers, beginninglessly kind, you should develop an unhypocritical Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta, thinking, "I shall definitely work to place them all in the peerless bliss of complete and perfect Enlightenment." That is the seventh (preliminary practice): making efforts in this (direction).

The Precious Human Rebirth

The working basis for practising like this is the precious human body. Because it is very difficult to obtain, you should not let yourself come under the sway of indifference or laziness, but should totally involve yourself in the practices. If when your fully endowed human body is snatched away by the demons of death and impermanence, you have to go empty-handed, then what will you do? Because this precious human form is difficult to obtain and easily lost, you should try to make your attainment of a fully endowed one purposeful at all times and in all situations. To make efforts in this is the eighth (preliminary practice).

A human form fully endowed with all the liberties and opportunities to study and practise the Dharma is extremely rare and precious. It is the vehicle through which you will attain Enlightenment or, if you are not careful, a lower rebirth. Its causes are your collections of merit and insight, particularly morality, as well as prayers for such a rebirth state. Śāntideva has said that its attainment is as rare as the odds for a blind turtle living on the bottom of an ocean and rising to the surface only once every hundred years to surface at just the spot where it would put its neck through a golden yoke that is floating about blown by the winds. In this analogy, the turtle is sentient beings, being blind is their ignorance, being on the bottom of the ocean is the lower rebirth states, coming to the surface is being reborn, the golden yoke is a precious human rebirth and its being blown by the winds is the vicissitudes of karma.

From the point of view of numbers as well, a human birth is rare. It is said that the number of hell creatures equals the grains of sand in the desert, hungry ghosts the dust particles in the air, animals the stars at night and humans the number of stars seen during the day. If you consider how it is possible to take a census of the number of people in a state, but impossible to count the animals, insects and microbes there, you will gain an appreciation of this. Furthermore, out of the world population, those with a kind heart are even rarer and, of those, the ones who have the liberty, opportunity and inclination to follow the Dharma are practically unheard of.

Therefore, having attained a precious human rebirth, do not waste it, for death will come all too soon. Do not be like a sea expedition going out for treasure and returning empty-handed. Without regard for temporary pleasures, practise the Dharma and gain ultimate and lasting happiness.

The Causal Condition for Success

Of the four conditions for successful practice, the causal one is making an effort to train your mind-stream with (thoughts of) impermanence and to develop renunciation. Furthermore, it is to turn away from compulsive attraction by seeing the (unsatisfactory) quality of all things of saṁsāra with respect to yourself and to things in general. That is the ninth (preliminary practice).

> Just as the causal conditions for a visual cognition are the elements of earth, water, fire, energy-wind and space of the object and of the cognitive base of the eye, likewise these common preliminaries are the building blocks of meditational practice.

The Main Condition

You should devote yourself to a perfect spiritual master such as the Guru who is a personality of the lineage, the Guru which is the words of the Buddha, the Guru which is ultimate reality, the Guru which is an imputation on an appearance and so forth. Then you must practise in whichever way he orally instructs you. Because being cared for by a perfect master is the main condition (for success), you should devote yourself in this way. That is the tenth (preliminary practice).

> The main condition for a visual cognition is the cognitive power of the eye. Likewise through the power of your devotion you will be able to realise all insights.

The Objective Condition

You must cut off completely all sectarian, biased feelings since (all the schools of tenets and lineages) are established by imputation and mental labelling and are conventionalities (for leading disciples to Enlightenment). You must develop the certainty that they are all non-contradictory and from each you can come to the natural, especially distinguished, primordial nature of reality, the abiding state of all things. As this is the objective condition for being undeceived about what is to be meditated upon, you must become certain like this. That is the eleventh (preliminary practice).

All the different schools of theories expounded in India and Tibet derive from Śākyamuni Buddha and are expressions of his skilful means to lead disciples of varying dispositions to the realisation of ultimate reality. They are different ways of explaining the same thing and, being merely words, are established as schools by people's mentally labelling them as such. None are in conflict. Just as a visual form is the objective condition for a visual cognition, so is your non-sectarian understanding of the true nature of the mind for successful practice.

The Immediate Condition

Not only must you make sincere effort from your heart with a state of mind in which you are free from compulsive attachment to meditation, you must also not have any sign whatsoever of expectations or worries such as thinking, "If I meditate now or in the future or have done so in the past this is worthwhile, but if not I am worthless." Because being free from expectations and worries is the immediate condition (for success), you must practise in a state of mind that is uncontrived. That is the twelfth (preliminary practice).

> The immediately preceding moment of consciousness is the immediate condition for a visual cognition, providing the continuity of its awareness. The above state of mind has a similar function in Mahāmudrā meditation.

This concludes the preliminaries.

Part Two:

MENTAL QUIESCENCE MEDITATION

The Essential Postures of Body and Mind

The actual body of the practice is divided into two: mental quiescence meditation (śamatha, zhi-nä) and penetrative insight meditation (vipaśyanā, lhag-t'ong) The first is as follows.

In general there are many methods for developing single-minded concentration (samādhi, ting-nge-dzin), but if you know one essential method, then hindrances and interferences will not come about and you will develop effortlessly the experiences and insights into primordial, pristine awareness, free from any faults wth respect to mental quiescence and penetrative insight.

The teachings of the meditative posture of Vairocana are a method for developing single-minded concentration for the development and completing stages of anuttarayoga tantra, and an effortless non-conceptual experience of bliss and clarity. Therefore beginners should rely on this essential point about the bodily posture.

For this, in order to control the downward-going energy, your legs should be either in the vajra-position or in the cross-legged posture of ordinary beings. In order to place the energy-winds of the solid element of the body into the central energy-channel, straighten your spine like the end of a spear. In order to induce the energy-winds of the liquid element into the central channel, place your hands in the equipoise meditation posture and hold them beneath your navel, and also raise both your shoulders back and even. To induce the energy-winds of the heat element into the central channel, keep your neck slightly bent like a hook.

To induce the energy-wind of the gaseous element into the central channel, have your eyes neither wide-open nor shut tight, but gazing at a point straight ahead from the tip of your nose. Your tongue and lips should be in their normal, relaxed condition or you may have your tongue touch your upper palate.

Mental quiescence or calm abiding is a blissful state of single-minded concentration free of thought and devoid of the five obstacles of mental dullness, agitation, foggy-mindedness, sleepiness and staleness. It can be achieved by many methods: focusing on an object, or none, or even on a conceptual thought such as a visualisation of the Four Noble Truths, in which case free of thought means free of extraneous thought. It is not at all blank-minded and is essential for all practices, especially those of the highest classification of tantra, anuttarayoga.

According to the tantra teachings, the mind and the energy-winds upon which it rides are inseparable. If the energy-winds (prāṇa, lung) are properly channelled, the mind will be focused; but when they run wild then thoughts do likewise. These winds run through energy-channels (nāḍi, tza), the main ones being the central, right and left ones parallel to and slightly in front of the spine. Normally the winds pass only through the right and left ones, and in this way act as the vehicle for deluded thoughts. Such delusions are stopped, however, when the energy-winds carrying them are no longer available, having been channelised and centralised into the central energy-channel. Therefore if your rough body is straight and in the correct posture, your energy-channels will also be in a proper position. Then the energy-winds can flow freely through them and, when properly channelled, your mind will be fully focused. For this reason the bodily posture of Vairocana is essential.

There are various classifications of energy-winds. According to the "Six Yogas of Nāropa", there are five major ones: (1) downward-going, controlling the discharge and retention of wastes in the lower orifices, (2) upward-going, controlling swallowing, speaking and other activities of the throat, (3) life-sustaining, maintaining the spark of life, (4) equalising, for digestion and separation of wastes and (5) all-pervading, handling all motor activities. Another classification is of the energy-winds associated with each of the bodily elements of earth, water, fire, energy-wind and space. In this text, both systems are mixed and the various parts of Vairocana's posture deal with channelising assorted ones of them.

The vajra-position is with both legs crossed, the feet resting on the opposite calves or thighs. The equipoise meditation posture of the hands is with them in your lap, palms facing upwards, left hand beneath the right with thumbs upright and touching. It is helpful to have a cushion beneath your backside.

With your body in this essential posture, the many advantages of a non-conceptual state and so forth will come about once you have naturally cleansed yourself of your tendency to follow trains of thought. But even if you merely hold your body in this essential posture your body and mind will become blissful and tranquil. Therefore holding yourself neither too tightly nor too tensely, first expel a little air and then maintain your breathing in an unforced manner.

When expelling air, feel that you are exhaling faults and distractions. Practise first some breath awareness and when you are calm, there is no need to focus on your breath any longer.

Refresh your memory a little about the preliminaries and then do not give any heed to (thoughts of) your past activities or think about what you will do in the future or what you are doing here. Place your mind, without (consciously) adopting or abandoning, in a fluid, natural state of being here and now, in which you are not manufacturing your ordinary, usual types of cognitions about the present moment. By doing this, your mind becomes pliable and you can develop single-minded concentration. Because these essential postures of the body and mind are the foundation stone for meditation, you should exert an effort in them. That is the first point (for mental quiescence meditation).

Focusing on a Visual Object

If you are unable to settle your mind in this state, you should focus by looking at an external object such as either a stick, a pebble, a Buddha statue, a flame of a butter lamp, the sky and so forth, whatever suits you. Do not think about such things as the colour or shape of the object which is the basis of your meditation. Rather place your attention single-mindedly without any wandering on merely the object itself and abandon having your mind being either too tight or too sloppy. Cut off completely any extraneous train of thought.

> If your mind is too tense, you will experience anxiety and frustration, if too loose mental dullness, foggy-mindedness and sleepiness. Like the strings of a lute, your mind should be tuned just right without any distortion.
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> The process of settling the mind on a visual object is like trying to see a stone on the bottom of a glass of muddy, turbulent water. Without worrying about the colour or shape of the stone, you will see it clearly when the mud subsides. Likewise when your thoughts subside you will be left with a clear view of your object. Therefore look at objects as a small child would without any mental chatter or commentary.
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> If you can focus without any conceptual thoughts or ideas, this is good. But should they arise, do not follow them out. Just let them pass and they will disappear. If you allow a thought to grow into a train of thought, it will be an obstacle to your meditation. You must realise that thoughts are the play of the mind, like ripples on water and light on leaves. They naturally dissolve.

You can also focus in front of you on either a written or visualised white syllable OṀ, red ĀḤ and blue HŪṀ, which are the nature of the body, speech and mind of all the Buddhas, or on white, red and blue dots, whichever suits you. In short, you should aim and fix your mind single-pointedly to whatever type of visual form suits it and gives it pleasure to hold. If you try to settle your mind on something that it finds uncomfortable to fix on or which your intellect cannot grasp, then when you try to make it go (to this object), it will ignore it. Having no interest (in this object), it will fix on something extraneous.

You should cut off completely all signs of thoughts such as thinking "I am meditating" or "I am not meditating" or expectations to settle your mind or worries that you will be unable to settle it. Meditate having your mindfulness keep a check not to let your mind fix for even an instant on something extraneous which it should not be meditating on at all. Do this well and let your meditation sessions be short and frequent. This is important for training your mind to settle single-pointedly with continuing clarity, lucidity and eagerness, so that it will not repeatedly lose the continuity of this state because of becoming tired.

> At first it is important to have short, but frequent meditation sessions. If you find the meditation blissful and soothing, you may pursue it for a longer period of time. However, if you begin to become depressed or bored while meditating, perhaps your sessions are too long. If you are tired, meditation becomes an unpleasant ordeal and you will not wish to continue. Therefore gauge yourself accordingly and take a break while you are still fresh and wish to continue. That way you will be happy to resume meditation. Suppose you have to walk twenty miles. If you go slowly and take frequent rests, you will not exhaust yourself and will reach your goal. The same is true for meditation.

If it is comfortable for your mind to take any one of these visual objects as its basis or focus for meditation, you should choose that one. If you wish to take each of these objects in turn, progressively, this is permitted. But, if you have taken one and find that sufficient, do not feel you have to go on to take them all as if going through an alphabet primer. In short, having your mind hold whichever visual form suits it is the second point (for mental quiescence meditation).

Other Sensory Objects

Once you have held such a (visual) object, then in progressive order you should take (as your object for concentration) a sound which is the object of your ear's consciousness, a smell which is the object of your nose's, a taste which is the object of your tongue's, a tactile sensation which is the object of your body's and so forth. For this, as far as sounds, smells and so forth go, you should direct your mind at merely an outstanding sound or a strong odour and hold it with the hook of your mindfulness not letting (your mind) wander astray. Except for letting your mind settle to its own level, you should not make any judgments whatsoever about the quality, quantity and so forth (of your object).

> Thus whatever situation you happen to be in, use it to help develop mental quiescence. If where you are meditating is noisy or someone is playing the radio, focus on the pure audial sensation of it without judgments, reactions or identifying the sound. For touch, you can focus on the feel of your clothing next to your skin. It is not necessary to eat something during meditation to focus on tastes. You can do this while taking your meals. Simply remain detached and follow the instructions as before.

When your mind has been holding whatever it has, you should break your session while you still have full clarity and then take a rest. This way you will not become bored. In-between sessions do not let the rope of your mindfulness break. As for how to look, you should be directed on what is in front of your nose. As for your body and speech, whether you are walking or sitting, talking or speaking, do these neither too strongly nor too much. As for your mind, try to cut the stream of your conceptual thoughts and mental chatter. By stages like this, you will build up the habit of single-mindedness. That is the third point (for mental quiescence meditation).

Therefore, if you lessen your activities, your mind will naturally quieten down. If you are constantly busy, it is more difficult to focus the mind since you will be worrying about many things at once and become easily scattered or mentally exhausted.

Eliminating Mental Dullness and Agitation

Furthermore, to eliminate such faults as mental dullness and agitation, you should visualise at the middle of your brow a dot the size of a pea, white, shining, lustrous, spherical and extremely clear, and direct your mind towards it. Sometimes you should direct your mind towards a black, lustrous, spherical dot the size of a pea at the point in front of you where your folded legs touch your seat. For mental dullness you should direct your attention to the white one and your way of looking should be as if into space. Your body should be in a breezy place and you should splash your face with running water. Wear thin clothes and follow light diet. Do not sit near fire nor in the sun. If you have mental agitation and your mind proceeds in many (directions), the visualisation and way of looking should be directed to the black dot. As for your activities, keep warm, do exercise and eat heavy, nutritious food.

> Mental dullness and agitation are the greatest obstacles to mental quiescence. With dullness, your mind either has no clarity or, if it does, your are in a daze. To perk yourself up, visualise a white dot at your brow and thus bend your mind upwards. The effectiveness of the white colour for eliminating dullness can be illustrated by putting a white cloth in front of your eyes. The white colour being the image on your mind awakens you a little and your mind naturally becomes brighter. Furthermore, if you stay in the sun or in a warm, stuffy place you will inevitably become drowsy and dull. Therefore stay where it is cool and breezy and you will be fresher. Also diet is

extremely important. Light food makes the mind similarly light.

With agitation, on the other hand, you are over-excited and your mind cannot stay where you wish to place it. Even if it maintains a hold on an object, part of it starts to wander astray. Visualising a black dot by your seat bends the mind downwards and the sombre colour naturally makes your mind more subdued. If you are very fidgety, physical exercise will tire you and cause your mind to wander less. Much agitation is due to the energy-winds being too light and active. Therefore a heavy, fatty diet will weigh down these winds and make you less flighty.

Thus for a properly balanced meditation it is important to look after your body. Your mind rides on the energy-winds through the energy-channels of your subtle body. For these to flow properly depends on the condition of your rough physical body. Therefore a sound body and mind are interdependent.

If you have neither mental dullness nor agitation, direct your eyes and mind to either a small blue dot or an actual (small blue) object (on the ground) at the distance in front of you at the end of your shadow (or about an arrow's length away). With respect to these, first you should think, "The dot and so forth I am supposed to meditate on is like this," and then you should simply project your mind out to it. If after this (the visualised object) is clear, this is best. But even if it is not clear, you should merely think that there is an object like this and then make that the focus of your attention. Then without making any analysis or minute enquiry about it, let your mind reach its level and naturally settle on it without any wandering.

The blue of a clear, dustless autumn sky is a neutral colour that neither uplifts nor subdues the mind. It is beneficial to have both mental placement and clarity with respect to this dot, but if you have only placement this is enough. With sufficient concentration, clarity will come automatically.

While you still have full clarity, break your session and then continue meditating later. In other words, have short and frequent sessions. Holding your mind (like this) is the fourth point (for mental quiescence meditation).

Focusing on No Object

As for directing your mind on no basis or object, you should stare blankly into space straight in front of you with opened eyes and not direct your mind at any object whatsoever.

Space, like the nature of the mind, is a permanent, unconditioned phenomenon not dependent on causes or circumstances. Therefore staring into space before you is a method of approach for meditation on the mind itself.

This meditation is also similar to those done in anuttarayoga tantra practices concerning the death process. Normally consciousness relies on all the bodily elements as its basis. During the death process, however, the elements as bases progressively fail and consciousness relies on less and less of them. This is figuratively described as the elements dissolving one into each other. First the earth or solid element fails and consciousness can no longer rely on it. Then the same happens with the water or liquid, fire or heat and energy-wind or gaseous elements. Finally, the finest level of consciousness, relying only on space, is left alone, inseparable from the finest level of life-sustaining energy. This is what experiences the Clear Light of death and passes into the in-between or "bardo" state and on into your next rebirth. Thus meditation on the mind with no object is similar to the tantric ones of taking the Dharmakāya as a pathway for death, in which you simulate in meditation the dissolution process of death and focus finally on the space-like mind itself in the Dharmakāya Clear Light experience.

Meditation on no object should not be confused with blank-mindedness in which you are completely dull as if in a stupor or a faint. It is extremely alert, mindful and clear, but as in the Clear Light death meditations, without any object or thoughts.

Without letting your mind think about anything, do not allow even the slightest mental wandering. Do not direct your mind to (thoughts of) what qualities this state has or does not have, or the past or the future. Post your mindfulness as a spy to check with great diligence that you do not wander astray, and then relax. In other words place yourself in a tranquil, uncontrived state of being here and now.

Do not wander for even an instant. Be as (attentive as) when threading a needle. Do not let your mind be turbulent, rather have it be like an ocean without any waves. Do not self-consciously try to accomplish anything, rather fix your mind like an eagle soaring. Be completely free from all expectations and worries.

When you have no mental wandering, thoughts will not come. But when mental wandering occurs, then because your thoughts will come one after the other, try to recognise them for what they are as soon as they arise. In other words, stare right at them and then fix your mind as before. No matter what thoughts arise in this way, just recognise them for what they are. Place your attention right on them without thinking anything like "I must block them" or "I have succeeded (in blocking them)", or feeling happy or unhappy. Just look at them with the eye of discriminating awareness. Take the thought itself as the basis or object for your mind to hold and then fix upon it. Train your mind not to fall into either too tense or too lose a state. That is the fifth point (for mental quiescence meditation).

> When you begin to meditate, it may seem that your thoughts are increasing. This is not so, for you are merely becoming more aware of the amount of mental traffic that passes through your mind.
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> The mind and its thoughts are neither the same nor different. If they were one, there would be no way to quiet or eliminate thoughts. If they were different and separable, you could have thoughts without a mind. Thoughts are temporary play of the mind. The mind is clear and pure without any specific qualities,

like a mirror. Thoughts are like the images on that mirror; they cannot be separated from it, nor are they the same as it.

Thoughts are the result of confusion about the true nature of reality, and there are many different kinds. Coarse or rough thoughts are easy to identify. For instance, if you are meditating on a cup, and the thought arises that you want a drink of tea and then you call someone to fetch it for you, this is a coarse thought. A fine or subtle thought would be thinking, "This is a cup" or "It is made of white porcelain", or identifying the sound of a radio while trying to focus on the cup. But whatever type of thought arises, identify it for what it is. Recognise that it is merely a thought, the play of the mind like an image on a mirror, and without grasping at it let it pass. Have your thoughts continually dissolve like a parade of characters marching across a stage without any ever standing still.

If you think that a little thought does not matter, this is a poor attitude. Forest fires grow from a small flame. Likewise from the small thought "This is a tea cup", if you dwell on it you will soon be in the kitchen brewing tea having completely discarded your meditation. Just look at the thought, without following it out, and it will naturally dissolve. There is nothing else it can do.

Focusing on the Breath and the Three Stages of Settling the Mind

As a method to hold the mind, you can direct it on the breath as its basis or object. Hold your breath with vase-breathing practice and fix your mind single-pointedly on it without any mental wandering. If you cannot hold your breath in the vase-breath manner, you should take as your object such things as the counting of your breath. Count your inhaling, exhaling and holding of your breath. Count at first up to twenty-one rounds and then gradually extend it to a hundred. Direct your mind to your nostrils and hold your attention on counting your breaths without letting your mind wander elsewhere.

But if you can hold your breath while (your body is) filled (with air) and then release it (with the vase-breathing technique), you should first expel all the air (from your lungs) three times and then breath in as much air as you can. Force it down beneath the navel and when you can no longer hold it, release it and exhale. Do this again and again and do not let your mind wander to anything other than this.

Focusing on the breath is another effective way to settle the mind. As mentioned above, the mind rides on the energy-winds or breath. Therefore if there is much turbulent breathing, there are many disturbing thoughts. If your breathing is relaxed, quiet or held, so will be your mind.

There are several types of breathing. Even or normal breathing is the type you have when neither sick nor excited. Intermediate is when you inhale and slightly hold your breath. Vase-like breathing is when you inhale, contract your sphincter and hold your upper and lower breaths together.

This last type has several divisions depending on where the breaths are held. The large vase-breath is held between the throat and navel centres, the intermediate between the heart and navel, and the small at the navel. Internal vase-breathing is held inside, while external on the exhale. In general, vase-like breathing has four defining characteristics: (1) held breath, (2) extended abdomen, (3) the ability for the breath to leak either out of your pores or into the central energy-channel and (4) the ability for the breath to be shot out of the top of the head through the central energy-channel once it has been held for a very long time.

Vase-breathing is a very advanced and potentially dangerous practice. Your Guru will normally teach it to you only after you have completed the extraordinary preliminaries of 100,000 prostrations and so forth. If you tamper incorrectly with your breathing, you can throw your energy systems into imbalance, causing much nervousness, frustration of energy and wild thought-patterns.

If mental dullness or agitation occur, exert effort in the methods to eliminate them in stages. If you cannot settle your mind on any of these types of objects enumerated, then take any other kind of object for meditation that suits you. Personality types are not all the same. Some people hear the teachings just two or three times and then are able to develop a settling of their mind. Some are unable to develop this even though they meditate a great deal. But if you nourish it and do not give up out of slothfulness, it is impossible for you not to develop it. But it is necessary to have an experienced Guru to dispel your problems, induce your success and so forth.

Nourishing (your meditation) in this way, (you pass through) three stages of settling your mind. The first is like a steep mountain waterfall. Your thoughts are coarse and many. On the second, your coarse thoughts set (like the sun). Although occasionally some thoughts will suddenly occur, you recognise them for what they are and as soon as you do so, they subside by themselves. The steam of your meditation flows on gently and steadily like a mighty river. Finally all your thoughts, both coarse and subtle, set (like the sun) and you settle in equipoise into a non-conceptual state.

> This third stage is also referred to as the river having merged into the ocean or the child reuniting with his mother after a long separation. Your thoughts are the river or child and the mind the ocean or mother. All turbulence and uneasiness have been settled, all murkiness stilled and you are in a perfect, pristine state. A more elaborate description of nine stages of settling the mind is found in the works of Asaṅga and Kamalaśīla. There the discussion is found of the eight composing mental faculties to eliminate the five deterrents to concentration, as well as explanations of the four types of attention and six mental powers used to progress through the nine stages. Although such an outline can be applied here, this present work does not include such details.

Because it is possible to have such a settling of the mind into a non-conceptual state of bliss and clarity in which your mind is in equipoise, alert, vivid, pristine and pure, you should enhance your enthusiastic perseverance until you attain such a settling. Even after you have reached such a state, you must practise so that its continuity will not be broken. That is the sixth point (for mental quiescence meditation).

Eliminating Mental Tightness and Looseness

If you have not reached this third stage of settling the mind, you must further enhance your enthusiastic perseverance. This you should do through the three techniques of tightening (your mental grip), relaxing it and meditating while being turned away (from both these necessities).

For tightening (your mental grip if it is too loose), you should sit in the essential bodily position, look in the proper way and take control of your cognitions. In other words, tighten up your meditation with discipline. Do not let your mind wander for even an instant. Be as if walking across a single-planked bridge. Draw your mind tight and perk it up so that it is vibrant (like a bell) but without thinking, "This is the object I should be meditating on." Do not let your mind wander for even a moment and make your meditation sessions short and frequent.

For relaxing (your mental grip if it is too tight), do exercises and then (sit) looking in the proper way.

> If you are tense, nervous and over-agitated, prostration and circumambulation of religious sites are recommended. This is a beneficial way to harness and use your excess energy. Afterwards when you are physically tired and sit back down in meditation, your mind as well as your body will relax and you will have less mental disturbance.

Do not direct your mind at any object, rather let your mind relax itself and loosen down to its natural state, uncontrived, unself-conscious, not anxiously caring. Just place it on whatever comes up. Let it become tranquil and relaxed. It will reach its own level in equipoise. Do not try to accomplish anything or exert yourself. Relax like a baby with a full stomach or a pile of straw when the rope tying it has been cut. Then fix your mind and have your mindfulness be in the ever-present moment so that you do not wander at all from this state.

Except for this, there is nothing to meditate upon. Just place your mind in its natural state and if your meditation sessions are short, lengthen them slightly. Settle in a resplendent state of mind, and if it dissolves take a rest. But even inbetween meditation sessions, have your mindfulness keep a careful check.

When meditating while turned away (from the necessity either to tighten or relax your mental grip), there will be times when you have no mental wandering and then thoughts will not come. But when your mind wanders or many thoughts arise due to some fleeting circumstances, if you try to get rid of them, you will not be able. Just look right at them kindly and think, "Wherever you are going, just go!" and thus you will intrude (and sever) the train of their going. Then one more will arise, a second will arise—recognise them for what they are. Do not even try to get rid of or abandon them, and do not follow them out. Do not be happy if your mind is settled or unhappy if it is running. Do not worry about your meditation not happening or have expectations and hopes that it will be good. Without any expectations or worries, have your mind take hold of the thought itself as its basis (for attention).

You will never be able to reach a non-conceptual state by blocking conceptual thoughts. Take these very thoughts themselves as your object and focus right on them. Conceptual thoughts dissolve by themselves. When they clear away, a non-conceptual state will dawn. Therefore practise like that.That is the seventh point (for mental quiescence meditation).

The Actual State of Mental Quiescence and the Three Boons

Next is the way to develop the (actual) state of mental quiescence and being made to recognise (its nature). According to its definition, mental quiescence is a state in which your mind is quietened of all mental wandering, be it thoughts or grasping at defining characteristics. It is a placement of the mind in single-pointed concentration on the non-conceptual nature of things and is free of mental dullness, agitation and foggy-mindedness. Previously this had been attained with effort, but now it does not rely on any effort. It comes about easily and is blissful, expansively roomy and flexibly fluid. Even when you arise from meditation, your mind does not alter at all. No matter where it goes, it comes back and rests in this very state.

> Just as a pigeon released from a boat in mid-ocean can do nothing but return to its ship, your mind, no matter how much activity it has, can only return to its settled state once you have achieved mental quiescence.

When you are walking, sitting, or whatever, your cognitions are at a leisurely pace, your mind is stable, relaxed, at ease, alert, clearly reflecting whatever appears, not garrishly sparkling, but more toned down. Because your cognitions are not sticky with respect to their objects, they do not grasp at all their details and thus your mind does not indulge itself in mental wandering.

At all times your mind should be stable like Mount Meru and clear like a mirror able to reflect anything. You should not be excited or inquisitively looking everywhere. If you focus too minutely on details, your mind will spin and become overwhelmed with thoughts. Be subdued and just let all thoughts and appearances pass through your mind without grasping onto them. If you are walking down a busy street and even should a dancing girl happen to be performing on the side of the road, just let her image pass through your awareness without letting your attention become glued to her. To be able always to maintain your mental composure is a sign of mental quiescence.

There are three equal boons you receive (in this state)—bliss, clarity and (bare) non-conceptuality. Depending on which is in a greater proportion, many things can occur such as the boon of heightened vision, the boon of heightened hearing, extra-sensory perception and even extra-physical powers. There are the ten signs (of single-minded concentration) and so forth. Any of these may happen when your mental quiescence is faultless, and such things will develop on your mind-stream like this. These are the foundation that will give rise to all benefits such as those deriving from penetrative insight.

So at this point, whether you have physical sickness, mental suffering, good or bad dreams, extra-sensory or extra-physical experiences, boons such as bliss, clarity or bare non-conceptuality—no matter what happens, good or bad—do not be attached or compulsively attracted. For sure they have no esence at all, so do not indulge yourself with any thoughts of happiness or depression about them. If you are obsessed with these boons, they will only serve as a root for saṁsāra, making you circle into one of the Three Realms. They cannot liberate you from cyclic existence. Even non-Buddhists have such accomplishments (as these boons), but they are of no benefit to them.

Extra-sensory and extra-physical experiences are a side product of single-minded concentration and mental quiescence. Even non-Buddhists attain them through various meditational techniques. In themselves, they are of no

> consequence unless used as a means for benefiting others.
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> The boon experiences of bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality are the field from which the crop of penetrative insight into their Voidness arises. To be obsessed with any of them, not realising their Voidness, leads to a rebirth in Saṁsāra as a god. Being born as a god in the Desire Realm comes from attachment to the boon of bliss, in the Form Realm from clarity and in the Formless from compulsive desire for bareness.

In short, if you are obsessed with and attached to whatever experiences and insights you have, you will destroy them. Be detached from them and remain steadily in a non-compulsive state of being unattracted. With enthusiastic perseverance, pull yourself out of restrictive laziness. If you meditate while increasing your tolerance for hardships, you will reap benefits beyond all imagination.

> Be like Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa who meditated in high mountain caves for twelve years eating only nettles. Do not give up if your food runs out or your bed is too hard. Like lifting yourself out of a box, uplift yourself from making excuses for not practising. With perseverance you will reach Enlightenment.

Therefore you must study about this (with a teacher). As both the Guru and disciple must not make any mistakes about the actual boons, comprehension (of the instructions), meditational insights and the way to develop (mental quiescence), make sure to recognise and know them with certainty.

The main thing is not to have any compulsive attraction to sensory objects and to have uncontrived admiration and loving respect for your Guru. Cultivate an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta with respect to the six types of beings. Have your mindfulness keep a close check so that you have no mental wandering. Make short-term plans as if you had no time and execute them straight up and down like bellows. Accomplish what you begin. Do not let yourself come under the sway of polite affectations or the eight worldly feelings.

The root of all attainments is your Guru-devotion and unwavering faith in his instructions. This, combined with the highest motivation of Bodhicitta, will propel you on to become a Buddha.

As death can come at any moment, do not make long-term fanciful plans such as "Next year I shall build a house and then take a wife. This room will be the nursery. I'll have three children and the furniture will be walnut..." and so forth. Live in the present moment with the goal of Enlightenment. Whatever you set out to do, such as a seven-day retreat, carry it through to completion. If you give up in the middle, this sets up a very self-defeating pattern.

Do not let yourself come under the influence of polite affectations such as flattering others for favours or trying to save face. Be like Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa who had no servants or masters to worry about. Cast off your bondage to the eight worldly feelings of being pleased when receiving gifts, love, attention and so forth, displeased when not, elated when everything is going well, depressed when it is not, delighted when hearing pleasant things, annoyed when not, being happy when praised and upset when abused.

All this is very important. If you practise faultlessly like this, you will develop experiences and insight without any effort. Therefore exert yourself to act in this way. That is the eighth point (for mental quiescence meditation).

Part Three:

PENETRATIVE INSIGHT MEDITATION

Looking at the Settled Mind

The second main topic is penetrative insight meditation (vipaśyanā). You should sit in the essential bodily posture as before. At this point the way of looking is extremely important. Your eyes should not be blinking, wavering to and fro or changing focus, but should be staring intensely with sharp focus directly ahead (slightly upwards) at the empty space before you.

> In mental quiescence your mind has become like a clear mirror. With penetrative insight you examine the nature of this mirror and the images in it. The way of looking is slightly different for these two. In mental quiescence your eyes should be looking straightforward, relaxed and in focus. For penetrative insight look more intensely and slightly upwards. This uplifts and sharpens the mind. The difference is like between your arm when it is at ease and when flexed.

Place you mind in a faultlessly settled state of equipoise in which it is natural, at its own level, uncontrived, unselfconscious, not anxiously caring and then make it slightly more intense so that it is clear and vivid, and have your mindfulness keep an ever-present check so that you have no mental wandering.

Now look scrupulously at the nature of your mind when it is in full, perfect mental quiescence. By nature does it have a colour, a form, a shape? Does it have an arising, a ceasing, an enduring, or not? Is it outside, inside, or where is it settled? Aside from this settled state, is there another consciousness separate from it? Is it nothing whatsoever, a blank emptiness that cannot be identified (as this or that)? Or, in this settled state, is there consciousness which although it cannot be identified (as this or that) is still a vividness, a pristine purity, a resplendence but which just cannot be put into words (like a mute person's tasting of sugar)? The nature of this settled mind, is it a total blackness, or is it a clear, vivid brightness?

All the crucial (attainments) are in terms of what it means by the true abiding nature of the reality of this (mind).

> If you realise the true nature of your mind, your Buddha-nature, you have Enlightenment. If confused about it and shrouded in the darkness of ignorance, you have saṁsāra and bring yourself suffering.

Therefore (when your Guru questions you about your meditation) if you spout forth intellectual ideas about it, or parrot descriptions you have heard, or use high-falutin Dharma jargon (you do not understand), or, because your mind is gripped by the eight worldly feelings (and you want to impress him), you say you have had fantastic flashes and insights when you have not—if you respond like this, it is like pulling the wool over your own eyes. You are only deceiving yourself. And if you are ordained, then you have broken your vow not to lie to your Guru with polite affectations. Therefore practise conscientiously. Do not patch up (some experience) out of your imagination, but be completely honest and (speak from) the experiences and insights that develop within yourself from the force of your own meditation.

> Do not worry if what you experience sounds a bit silly. If after looking you find that your mind is white, report this to your Guru. He will say, for instance, to check if it is ever yellow. If you come back and say, "It is yellow," he will then say, "No, actually it is neither." Through such honest exchange and interplay, your Guru will be able to lead you to recognise the nature of your mind. When you look at or examine your mind with incessant questions as above you may not recognise its

nature even if you see it. Therefore you must rely on your Guru and be totally honest with him, otherwise he cannot help you. What is at stake is your liberation from suffering, Enlightenment and ability to help others.

As this is imperative, tighten your awareness and look (at your mind). Then take a rest and afterwards have another look. As it is necessary to look at the nature of the mind when it is settled, the way you should set it throughout all of this is to place it in a clear, lucid, shining state like the sun free of all clouds.

Tightening your awareness at this point and making an effort to look at its nature is the first way for you to be made to recognise (the nature of your mind). As this is so, the Guru must question and train his disciples in accordance with their mental temperaments and capacities. In order to tame some, it may be necessary to push and question them repeatedly in order to see if they have an intellectual understanding, a flash experience, an insight or a solid experience, and to make them recognise these without mixing in affected Dharma jargon. The disciple likewise must exert himself in this. That is the first point (for penetrative insight meditation): looking at the nature of the (settled) mind.

Looking at the Moving or Thinking Mind

Next, to cut from its root the foundation (of ignorance) you must examine thoroughly the moving mind or train of thought, and be made to recognise it for what it is. Adopt the bodily posture, way of looking and acting as before. Place yourself in a state in which you have bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality—all three, and then relax in this pristine purity and let a fleeting thought arise all of a sudden from this (state) or purposely emanate a thought of whatever seems suitable.

Look at the nature of the cognition that has been emanated. Look at it at the time it is emanated. Having looked at the enduring of what has been emanated, does it have a colour, or a shape? Is there a place it arose from, a place it endured in, a place it ceased into? What about it? Is (this thought) located outside, or inside the body? If it is inside, is it in the centre of the heart, for instance, (in the brain) and so forth? Inside, outside, wherever it is, just how does it endure and how is it emanated? Investigate this.

This mind, is (its nature) a conditioned phenomenon (arising from causes), or is it unconditioned? Does it have an arisal, a cessation, a colour, or a shape? If it does, then what kind does it have, or is it the case that you think it does not (have any arisal and so forth)? If you say that it cannot be thought of as being like this, well then, is there still some conscious aspect of it which nevertheless has no arisal or cessation and so forth? When you look at a thought, is it that all thoughts are a voidness, free from all mental fabrications (of extreme modes of existence), with no arisal or cessation? After you have looked at a thought, is it that it disappears completely, leaving no trace? All thoughts that occur, is it that they pop up but cannot be identified (as being like this or like that)? Take a look. If you say that they pop up but cannot be identified (as being like this or like that), then at that very moment (when a thought pops up), is there or is there not (another) thought to the effect that there is no identifiable component here?

> There is no end to the amount of questions to which you can subject a thought such as "I saw my friend yesterday." Where is this thought? Where did it come from? What is it made of? Is this thought the same shape as your friend and is the image of your friend the same as your friend himself? When this thought passes, does it leave no trace like a cloud disappearing from the sky, or does it leave a footprint like a child walking on the beach? If you say this thought has no qualities and cannot be found, then what about the thought that thinks that? If a mute person cannot put his thoughts into words, does this mean he has no thoughts?
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> By interrogating thought like this you can "question it to death". If you are plagued by thieves and you catch one and publicly flog him, and then do the same for several more, the thieves will get the idea not to come any more and you will be free of them. The same thing will happen with your thoughts. Persistent questioning takes the life out of them and they will not bother to come so often. And when they do, they will be weaker in force and not so bold. In this way you will come to see the nature of your mind and thoughts.

After a thought has arisen or you have made one come, take a look at it without blocking or grasping on to it. Whether it has a happy (feeling) to it or an unhappy one, look at the individual natures of happy and unhappy (feeling tones). No matter how many thoughts you nave, look at them. When a delusion has arisen strongly, such as one of the five poisons (of desire, anger, closed-mindedness, pride or jealousy), or you make one arise, take a look at it too. Making sure to cut out any exaggerated ideas you might superimpose from within, look at the (deluded) thought itself (such as anger), the object of that thought (an image of an enemy) and the immediately preceding thought and check to see, for instance, if there is any difference as far as the mind (or consciousness aspect of them) is concerned.

When you see that the nature of thought is a bright, clear awareness, then look to see whether there is any difference between the bright, clear awareness you saw previously with respect to the settled mind and the bright, clear awareness you see now with respect to a thought. If you cannot decide, then draw the thought back and place yourself into a state of clear awareness.

> This is a figure of speech. Thoughts are not like a jack-in-the-box which you can stuff back into your mind. What is meant is to cease interrogating the thought and let it dissolve.

When (another) thought all of a sudden comes up when you are not looking, then look at its very nature to see how it in no way adulterates that of your original, normal consciousness.

> When a wave rises and falls, has the ocean basically changed? Does a cloud affect the sky?

As this is what you must see, look very well.

In short, when the Guru and disciple working together have reached this conclusion based on how thoughts arise (in the disciple) and how he understands them, then the root has been cut of the foundation (of his ignorance) and the true meaning has been reached. That is the second point (for penetrative insight meditation): making an effort in the methods to look at (the nature of the moving mind) so as to see and be made to recognise it for what it is.

Looking at the Mind Reflecting Appearances and at the Mind in Relation to the Body

Next, in order to be made to recognise the inseparability of the mind and appearances, you should look (at the mind) when it is reflecting an appearance (in a moment of bare perception). With your way of looking and bodily posture as before, focus your eyes and attention single-pointedly on a specific object, such as a vase, your image in a mirror, Mount Meru or any suitable visual form in the space (before you). Look at it scrupulously. Relax your awareness of it slightly, and then look at it again.

Likewise, look at the nature of a sound that is the object of your ears' (consciousness) and see if there is any difference (in nature) between a pleasant and an unpleasant, or a loud and a soft one. Look at the sound of your own voice and that of someone else, and so forth. Likewise look at a fragrant smell that appears as an object to your nose's (consciousness) and at a foul one, at both a delicious and an unpalatable taste on your tongue, at both a pleasant and an unpleasant, a hot and a cold and at an intensely painful physical sensation on your body—look at whatever comes up. At such a time, is the appearance something that passes away by ceasing to exist? When reflecting an appearance, are the mind and the appearance two separate things? Does the appearance come into the mind (from outside) or is it that when the mind reflects something it goes out and catches hold of an appearance thinking "I am going to reflect it"? Actually, the mind and appearances (on it) are inseparable (like a "magic mirror" and the images on it). There is just the resplendence of an appearance and Voidness, with no (truly existent) object.

Take a look at the consciousness that is doing the looking and at its five types of sense objects, each in turn (first sights, then sounds, smells, tastes and tactile sensations). Look to see if there is any difference between these two (namely, consciousness and the appearance of its sense objects), and then look for what is the difference between an appearance that is the object (of a consciousness) and the consciousness that has it as its object. When you have looked at an object, is it the case that the object is something out there, solid and real?

> When you close your eyes, does it disappear? When you put your hand in front of your eyes, where is the clarity of the appearance?

If you say it is not, then it seems as though there is no difference at all between an object (on the one side) and the mind (on the other) that can look starkly at (this object) without any obstruction but which (on its own part) is at ease, does not hold (anything as its object) and in which nothing (appears) clearly. If you say it is impossible to think that there is no difference between these (two), but rather it is the case that the object is something out there, solid and real, then what about the very thought that thinks that? (Is its object something out there?) Take a look at this.

Likewise, look to see whether the body and the mind are the same or different. If they are the same (or one thing), then the body which is something that arises and ceases and the mind which is something permanent (by nature) with no arisal or cessation would have to be the same.

> Although your cognitions, like your body, change from moment to moment and are thus impermanent, the nature of the mind as a clear, void, blissful awareness is something that does not change and is permanent in the sense that it does not depend

> on causes or circumstances. The nature of your mind does not arise out of nothing when you are born or wake up, nor does it cease when you die or fall asleep. The awareness is by nature the same regardless of what it is aware of.

And if they are different, then you should be able to identify two separate things, the body and the mind (totally apart from each other). But the mind is not something that you can pinpoint here (or there). It is not (only) at the top of your body or at the bottom, it completely pervades it. The fact that you can experience feelings (all over), what is that due to?

The body and mind are like something that supports and the thing that is supported (like a cup and the tea in it). But, if you say that the body is outside and the mind inside, (as two separate things) like a man and his clothing, then when it comes to experiencing feeling, if you think that it is the body alone that has feelings, then a corpse would also have to have feelings. If you say that the mind (alone) has the feelings, then the two (body and mind) would have to be different (and unrelated).

Now the mind is something that cannot be killed or in any way affected. If when your body is pricked by a thorn your mind feels it, then how is this different from the example when you burn the clothes worn by someone you burn the person who is wearing them too?

When you prick the body, do you prick the mind also? After looking at this thoroughly, you must reach a firm decision.

> Namely, you must decide that the body and mind are neither the same, nor different. Conventionally they are like something that supports and the thing supported, but ultimately they are not two inherently existing objects sharing such a relation.

In connection with this you must also realise that whatever feelings arise are like waves and (your mind is like) water.

Because when you place your mind on this realisation you cut through from this state to the true meaning of the actual nature of reality, you must look (at your mind) like this. That is the third point (for penetrative insight meditation).

Looking at the Settled and Moving Minds Together

Once more settle your mind into a state of pure clarity and Voidness and look at its nature. Then make a thought arise and look at its nature. Look to see if the natures of these two—the settled mind and the moving mind—are the same or different. After looking, if you see that they are different, then how are they different? Do the settled and moving minds alternately come up like when you have strung thread around two poles and twirl it together (to make a string)? Is the settled mind like a field and the moving mind that arises like the crops growing in it? Or are the two of them the same like a snake or rope and its coils (in that you cannot have a coil separate from the rope)? If so, then when the mind is settled without any thought arising, is it also moving, and when it is moving, is it also settled? There is a big difference between the moving mind which can think up anything and fantasise in endless variety and the settled mind which stays without moving. But if you think that the two are different in nature, then is the difference in terms of colour, shape and so forth? Is it in terms of arisal, endurance and cessation, or of past, present and future, or of permanence and impermanence? Look to see how they are different.

When you know through meditation what thoughts truly are, then (you realise that) the nature of both the settled and moving minds is nothing but the same. The way they arise is by alternating, and when it is settled there is nothing that is moving and when it is moving there is nothing that is settled. Like water and waves, it is the mind alone that functions and acts. That is all there is to it. When you understand that both the settled and moving minds are nothing more than a brilliant, clear Voidness, then you have a little understanding.

> It is like a mirror, which has the same void clarity whether or not it is reflecting an object.

Now, when you draw a thought in (for interrogation) and then place yourself in meditation, is it that (the thought) has gone into a clear Voidness, or has it disappeared and afterwards in its place is a clear Voidness?

> In other words, is it like the darkness of night dissolving into the clarity of daylight? Or is it like the darkness disappearing and being replaced by daylight?

Or is it that the vivid thought itself is a clear Voidness? If you think that it is like either of the former two, you still must make very strong requests to your Guru (for his inspiration) and then look once more with effort and try to see with certainty how things really are.

The ways of looking at the nature (of the mind) can be approached in three styles.

> These ways of looking have been at the settled mind, the moving or thinking mind, the mind reflecting an appearance, the mind in relation to the body and both the settled and moving minds together.

Those who skip ahead develop penetrative insight first and then mental quiescence, or sometimes they develop both together at the same time when previously they had neither. Those for whom it happens at once develop both mental quiescence and penetrative insight at the same time by merely being taught their descriptions. This is due to the power of their previous training.

> This refers to instincts from former lifetimes as is the case with Incarnate Lamas (Tulkus).

Those who progress gradually develop these in stages. Here (the explanation has been given) in accordance with this latter type of person's approach and it must be taught after assessing the way in which the disciple has his experiences.

When looking, you must place yourself in a state of clarity without any grasping, like a small child looking (at the paintings of deities) in a temple. Exert yourself with great enthusiasm to look in this way and abandon laziness. Turn away from your compulsive obsessions and have no requirements (which you feel must be met before you can practise). Have a renounced mind and faith, admiration and loving respect for your Guru. Make your mindfulness firm so that your mind does not wander and practise in an uncontrived state without being fettered by expectations or worries. Be interested only in your future lives without letting yourself go after ever-changing worldly concerns. If you make an effort to look at the mind (with an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta), then it is impossible for you not to develop quickly and with certainty the pristine awareness of penetrative insight. Therefore decide about the settled and moving minds. That is the fourth point (for penetrative insight meditation).

Recognising the Nature of the Settled Mind

If you have cultivated looking at the nature (of the mind) like this in accordance with the oral teachings concerning the mind, there is practically no need for (your Guru) to make you recognise (its nature). It will reveal itself to you from within. Some people, however, do not recognise it even if this has happened. Others will have only a dry intellectual understanding of it from reading or hearing teachings and, although they have developed no experience or insight despite their desire to do so, will say they have and describe them in unerring Dharma jargon. The Guru must be able to differentiate these (types of people) and the disciple on his part must practise taking all this to heart.

> After you have examined or looked at the nature of the mind and reached a decision about it, you must experience it in meditation and recognise the experience in terms of what you have previously ascertained. Therefore the Guru is essential, for through his interplay and questioning he leads you to the correct decision about the nature of your mind and confirms for you when you have had a true meditational experience or insight into it. This is what it means for a Guru to make you recognise your mind or, literally, to introduce you to it.

The first way to make beginners recognise the nature (of the mind) when they are looking at it (is as follows). Look at the nature of the settled mind in the way as was done before. The nature of the settled mind is a clear, vivid brilliance, not a total nothingness. In this settled state there is clear, open, resplendent, gently flowing consciousness which cannot be identified (as this or that). You cannot say that it is like this, that it has a colour, a shape and so forth. It cannot be put into words or expressed as being like this or that. Although it cannot be identified (as this or that), nevertheless pristine, pure, brilliant resplendent, vivid (moments of) consciousness which make things clear with no obstruction happen to you (all the time). This consciousness is not something that previously you did not see, but now you do; or previously you did not experience, but now you do; or previously you did not know about, but now you do.

> It has always been the case, for the nature of the mind is permanent.

But you must know from the depths of your heart that it cannot be pinpointed or said to be like this or that.

If you have only a (dry, smug) intellectual understanding that it is a clear resplendent unidentifiable state of clarity and Voidness, you will be unable to make any progress. Therefore this will not do. But if this (realisation) has dawned from within (from your own meditational practice), then you have really had penetrative insight into the (nature of) the settled mind. Therefore except for conscientiously (meditating) starkly on the nature (of the mind), there is no way to see it.

If (the Guru) introduces you to it prematurely, you will be left with only a dry intellectual understanding and will become jaded. Then no matter what other things he may try to explain to you, they will only cause harm. Therefore (the Guru) must not try to make you recognise (the nature of your mind before you are ready to see it).

> If the Guru tries to make you recognise the nature of your mind before you have had any meditative experience, you will have only an intellectual understanding. Because of your smugness and self-satisfaction, you will become jaded, lacking all appreciation for the profundity of the teachings. Closed-mindedly you will feel you understand everything already and

therefore will disparage all your Guru's further efforts to teach you. Like a stone in water, you will not absorb anything he says and thus you will make no progress. Therefore it is better for the Guru to be reserved about teaching the nature of the mind, lest he do so prematurely and jade the disciple.

If you have not cut the stream of your thoughts, you will not see the nature (of your settled mind). If you do not see this nature, you cannot be made to recognise it for what it is. And if you have not recognised it, then your meditation will not become an actual path (to Enlightenment).

When you have excellent experiences and boons (in meditation), look at them. Even when things are going poorly, try repeatedly to intensify the clarity.

> In other words, when you are in pain, do not indulge yourself but rather look at the nature of the mind experiencing this pain and try to intensify and focus on its clarity. This is similar to the technique used to eliminate mental wandering in tantric visualisation meditations, namely intensify the clarity of the visualisation and extraneous mental activity disappears.

To teach the methods for cultivating such type of practice is called a (meaningful) oral explanation. When you know how to meditate, it is called a finished oral explanation. Then if you cultivate this state without any mental wandering, there will be no trouble in developing experiences and insights. Therefore, in order to reach certainty about the nature (of the mind) after you have seen it and to have all your doubts cut, it is necessary (for a Guru) to introduce you to it (in other words, cause you to recognise it).

In general, there are two things (needed) in meditation, mental quiescence and penetrative insight. Of these, (mental quiescence) is when your mind has been placed in its relaxed, natural state and you have a settling of the mind into its natural, clear, resplendent state after all thoughts have been quieted in their place (having looked at them the moment they arose). Your conventional mind does not indulge in any mental wandering concerning the life or worldly things. It is blissful and tranquil, with all delusions quieted into a fine sleep. Settled single-pointedly on the nature of virtue, your mind stays wherever you place it for as long as you want. It is under your control. You do not feel even the passing of your breath in and out. If your (meditation) is like this, then it is a distinguished state of mental quiescence.

The flash experiences and boons of bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality (you receive in this state) are very important. They do not fulfil the requirement to count as insights, (for that you need penetrative insight), but you cannot do without them. If you cultivate them without any compulsive attachment, and remain in this state (of mental quiescence) without letting yourself lapse into any mental dullness, agitation, or unspecified state of indifference, you will come to know and experience what kind of object your mind is—although you cannot say that the nature of the mind is like this or that, or has this colour or that shape, for it is beyond all words, thoughts and description. It cannot be put into words, like the sexual bliss of a young adult. A unity of clarity and Voidness, it is free from all extremes of mentally fabricated (modes of existence) and cannot be identified (as this or that). It is unadulterated by any conceptual thoughts of the Dharma. It is unsullied by any conceptual worldly thoughts. It cannot be pinned down (with the conceptual thought that) this is a non-conceptual state or one of mental quiescence.

Such a consciousness which is in its own state, at its own level, in its own place is called the root of all good qualities the normal mind or simply the mind. If you are unconscious of it, then you have ignorance or unawareness and the cyclic existence of saṁsāra. But if you are conscious of it, this is called awareness, pristine awareness, Nirvāṇa, the pristine awareness of simultaneity, the primordial state, the Clear Light, or penetrative insight. Therefore now you should divide clearly this headwater of either saṁsāra or Nirvāṇa.

> If you recognise the mind, it is Nirvāṇa; but if you do not, then it brings you saṁsāra. Thus the nature of saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa is the same. Their difference is in terms of your awareness of their nature.

When your Guru introduces you to the nature (of your mind), you will recognise it like meeting (an old friend) you knew long ago. Such a recognition is called recognising the mind. (The nature of the mind) is not something produced by the great discriminating intelligence of a disciple or the skilful oral teaching of a Guru.

> It has been there all the time and is something you come to recognise only through meditational practice.

From time immemorial (your mind) has been like this, but because it has been obscured by delusions and thoughts you did not recognise it. But now that the stream of your thoughts has been cut and you have been introduced to it, you know it.

The mind is a pristine clarity that cannot be identified (as this or that). Although it has no inherently existent nature as such, yet it allows for clear appearances. The defining characteristic of the mind is that by nature it is clear, void awareness. It is pristine and alert with no discontinuity. That is the nature (of the mind). When you have a stark recognition of this, cultivate it at all times without any wavering. The benefits from this are beyond all imagination.

Therefore to develop penetrative insight into (the nature of) the settled mind and to recognise it, there is this first actual introduction (by your Guru to your mind). Take it to heart, put it into practice and cultivate it continually. This is extremely important. That is the fifth point (for penetrative insight meditation): recognising in this way (the nature of the settled mind) and cultivating it.

Recognising the Nature of the Moving or Thinking Mind

The second way of looking (namely at the nature of the moving or thinking mind) cuts the root of the foundation (of ignorance). There are two points (in connection with this): (1) being introduced to the non-conceptual mind and (2) being introduced to the moving mind or thoughts, (this latter one) referring to being introduced to the moving mind when a thought has already arisen or you make one arise.

The first is as follows. You have looked at the pristine, clear, resplendent, non-conceptual settled mind which is an awareness free of mental dullness and agitation. You know that (its nature) has not arisal or cessation, yet you do not (conceptually) think, "It has no arisal or cessation, no colour, shape and so forth." To do that is penetrative insight into the non-conceptual mind.

> To conceptualise about the lack of qualities of the non-conceptual state of mind is to go to an extreme of making non-existence into a "thing".

As for the second, if you say that all thoughts (by nature) are a total Voidness with no arisal or cessation, you are taking Voidness too literally (and going to the extreme of nihilism). What they are is a vividness that leaves no trace and (the nature of) which has no arisal, cessation or enduring and cannot be identified as having this colour, that shape and so forth. If (you realise) this much you have developed a little (understanding). Furthermore, you must recognise that they cannot be identified as this or that and do so without conceptually thinking. "They cannot be identified as this or that." And without any grasping or contradiction (in your mind between thoughts being both vivid and void, you must recognise) that thoughts both arise and subside at exactly the same time (like a drawing on water). In addition you must gain the insight that there is not the slightest difference (in nature) between thoughts and the object of thought, between the mind when it is settled and when it is moving, between past (and present) mind, between past (and present) thoughts and so forth. (They are all by nature) clear, brilliant awareness.

When you draw a thought in (for interrogation) or when a thought disappears, it is not that it has gone into a clear Voidness (or one has been left in its place). Rather, the thought that arises all of a sudden is itself a clear Voidness. When you realise or gain this insight, then you have recognised (the nature of thought).

There is not even the slightest difference between the non-conceptual state and that of true insight into the fact that moving thoughts, the settled mind and the nature of thoughts themselves are all three clear, void and brilliant. To hold the two (as being different) is an interpolation of the mind that does not recognise them.

Previously when you did not recognise (the nature of) thoughts, you were unable to take them into your meditation. This was ignorance (or unawareness). But now that you recognise them, you can meditate on thoughts themselves and thus they become awareness or pristine awareness. Now you can make thoughts the root of meditation. Previously the thoughts themselves were obscuring themselves, and so you could not see them.

> They were so thick, they obscured their own nature. But now they are transparent; you can see right through them.

This present meditation on conceptual thoughts is known to be more especially distinguished than the meditation on the non-conceptual state. Therefore whatever thoughts arise, you should take them as what to recognise. When thoughts do not arise, then stay in this state of them not arising. There is no need to emanate (or produce) them. When they do arise, then stay in this state of them arising. There is no need to collect them back. Therefore, without giving any heed to expectations or worries, bring your thoughts themselves into the nature of your meditation.

Thoughts are nothing more than the mind. This mind, which naturally subsides, is the Dharmakāya, by nature a clear, void brilliance, devoid of anything to be subsided or anything to do the subsiding. When you gain this insight, then you have had penetrative insight (into the nature of) thought. You have recognised the Dharmakāya, which is a unity of clarity and Voidness.

> Thus you must realise that thoughts, being a clear Voidness, arise and subside at exactly the same time, like a handprint on water. They have no endurance and there is no interval between their arising and subsiding. Nor is there space between them as if they were "things" that could be separated by space. This is what the term "naturally subsides" means, which when translated literally is "self-liberation".

In short, you should recognise whatever (thoughts) arise, place your mind single-pointedly and uncontrivedly right on their very nature, without any mental wandering, and cultivate this state. This is the second actual introduction (by your Guru to the nature of your mind). Having recognised it, however, is not enough. You must cultivate the continuity (of this awareness). That is the sixth point (for penetrative insight meditation).

Recognising the Nature of the Mind Reflecting Appearances and of the Mind in Relation to the Body

The Third introduction is being made to recognise (the nature) of the mind reflecting an appearance and this is in terms of the inseparability of the mind and appearances. When you look at any of the five types of external sense objects (sights, sounds, smells, tastes or tactile sensations), the object which is obvious with no obstruction but about which you cannot think that it is some object out there, solid and real, and the vivid mind that is looking at it without actually clutching something—these two are neither the same, nor different. However you should not (conceptually) think that they are neither (the same, nor different).

> To do so would imply that being neither was some sort of inherent nature truly existent in them.

Likewise, the body and the mind are neither the same nor different. They are inseparable, unity of clarity and Voidness, of appearance and Voidness, like the (reflection of the) moon in water.

> If the reflection or appearance of the moon in a puddle and the water were the same, then when you put your hand over it, the appearance should still be there. If they were different, you should be able to lift the appearance off the puddle like a piece of paper.

Furthermore, whatever feelings you have, such as hot or cold, are also appearances. Because you do not recognise them as (a unity of) appearance and voidness, your mind mentally labels them (as truly existent) and thus you have the infinite variety of grasping. But aside from this, on the ultimate level, whatever physical or mental feelings you have are devoid of being an (inherently existing) basis for labelling. You must gain this insight.

In a dream, you have a body and you see many appearances, and they all seem real and truly existent. But when you awake, you see that they were all of your mind and appearing to your mind, and that they had no true basis for their existence or for you to have labelled them "my body" and so forth. The same is true of death with reference to your life's experiences and when you awake from ignorance and see what you deceptively considered concrete and real is actually void of existing as such.

Appearances all come from the mind. If you think there are ghosts or demons, you will see them. If you do not believe in them, you will not. Once Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa was meditating in a cave and, noticing a hole in the wall, he wondered if it might contain a ghost. As soon as this thought arose, a horrible ogress riding on a musk deer appeared and asked him, "Why did you call me? Your grasping ego sent for me. Quiet your mind and then I can leave." Likewise, it is because you have been fooled into thinking that appearances exist as real, solid objects "out there" that you believe them to exist that way. This is nothing more than superstition.

All appearances are reflections of the mind, void of true, inherent existence as something solid "out there" existing from its own side. For instance, great Lamas will come to Bodh Gayā and see it as a paradise and all the people there as deities. To a beggar, it will appear as a hell. And for each of them, this is reality. Consider a glass of liquid. A hell-creature sees it as molten copper, a hungry ghost as pus and blood, a fish as a home, a human as water and a god as nectar. Each of these is merely an appearance to and of the mind. However things appear to you, that is your mind. But appearances are all deceptive, because they appear to be real and "out there", when in fact they are not.

Consider the same person wearing the same set of thick clothes in summer and in winter. At one time he labels them heavy, at another thin and light. What is the basis for his labelling them as such? There cannot be an inherently existing basis for this in the clothing; it is all appearance. The same is true with feelings.

Snuff and chili pepper are either delicious or terrible depending on what you are accustomed to, in other words how they appear to you.

Whatever appearance comes up (before you, such as your finger), look at it (in an intensely staring) manner and focus your mind (on it single-pointedly for several minutes). Then relax your stare a little. At first all the details are sharply there. But then after a while, the (image) goes away in its very place because either you became nauseated and did not want to look at it any more, or your eyes went numb or started to tear. But then when you look at it a little (once more), a vivid appearance that cannot be grasped comes (again). It has come back in its very place.

At this point (you should realise) that your own (mind) and the appearances to and of it are inseparable. They are (a unity of) appearance and Voidness, resplendent without any object (inherently existing on its own side). Because there is this reflexive appearance of the actual abiding nature of reality, also known as the defining characteristic of the mind, there are no two separate, different things—external appearances and the internal mind. The mind's own lustre arises with no obstruction; that is all.

Appearances as objects to be grasped and consciousnesses to grasp them are both the arisal of deception. At such a time, these (appearances) cannot be singled out to the side; they appear because they are the self-deception of the mind. Therefore the mind is the appearances. Aside from this, there is no such thing as an appearance that can be established even to the slightest degree as existing inherently as a separate object.

> A scarecrow seen at a distance appears to be a man. What is this appearance, except for your mind?

Previously, because this was obscured by ignorance or the mind's grasping (for true existence) you could not see it. But now that the stream of your grasping conceptual mind has been cut, you can recognise the (reflecting mind's) own nature and that there are no (truly existent) objects. Without grasping at appearances (to be truly existent) you see that appearances are resplendent and void and are not (inherently existing) objects. They are known as the light-rays of the Dharmakāya, appearances arising simultaneously (with Voidness, like a sprout and its shadow).

> Thus when your friend appears before you, just see his appearance and remain in the here and now. Do not think, "Oh, what a good friend he is," or "What a horrible friend, he didn't write." Do not cling to an idea of this person as an unchanging concept, inherently existent, solid and real. Remain open, fresh and spontaneous, without expectations, worries or preconceptions and realise the inseparability of appearance and Voidness. Remain with the void appearance of the person and not your fixed ideas.

Now cultivate (this awareness) without any fabrication. Give free rein to your six conglomerates and cultivate practising in terms of whatever appears to the mind.

> The six conglomerates are the consciousness, congnitive power and objects of your faculties of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. Realising that a consciousness, cognitive power and object are all three interdependent, void of existing inherently alone and all necessary for a cognition, just relax and be aware of whatever comes up.

With your mind comfortable and at ease in this state, place it uncontrivedly on the actual nature of reality. Do not try to achieve bliss, clarity, voidness or excellence. Do not dwell on the past. Do not think of the future. Have no thoughts of the present. Do not meditate by intellectualising. Letting your mind be at its own level, fluidly flowing in the here and now, without any effort or anxious cares, place yourself in the natural state of the mind itself. Place yourself in a state of the inseparability of appearance and Voidness, the inseparability of the sounding (of sounds) and Voidness, the inseparability of bliss and Voidness, the inseparability of awareness and Voidness, the inseparability of clarity and Voidness. When you understand with bare perception the inseparability of appearance and Voidness like this, namely how appearances are not blocked but likewise cannot be grasped, then you have had penetrative insight into (the mind reflecting) appearances. You have recognised the Dharmakāya which is a unity of Voidness and appearance. If you cultivate the continuity of this state, you will develop stable, sublime experiences and insights. Being made to recognise the nature of the mind reflecting appearances is the third introduction. That is the seventh point (for penetrative insight meditation): cultivating your practice in this way.

Recognising the Nature of the Settled and Moving Minds Together

Next is the introduction made after having looked to see if the settled and moving minds are the same or different. When you analysed whether the settled and moving minds were the same or different, you understood from (the nature of) the two how to make thoughts into your meditation, for the settled and moving minds are nothing but the same. The way they arise is that they alternate. When the mind is settled it is not moving, and when it is moving it is not settled. But the agent for both is the mind alone and the nature of both is a clear, void brilliance. It is nothing more than that.

Furthermore, it is not that after you draw a thought in (for interrogation) then you see a clear, void brilliance. Nor is it that when a memory or thought disappears, it goes into a clear Voidness or one is left in its place. Rather, the thoughts that arise in the moment all of a sudden are themselves a clear, void brilliance. When you have gained this insight or understanding, you know the abiding nature of the mind.

The settled and moving states can be referred to as fingers dividing from the same hand.

> They are both of the same nature as the hand, but if it is one finger it is not the other.

When the mind is settled it is a clear resplendence in a non-conceptual state. When it is moving with thoughts, the nature of these thoughts themselves is a clear, void brilliance. It is nothing more than that.

When you have the insight that all appearances of objects are simply affectations of the mind like waves on water and cannot be ultimately established as having any true, independent existence, this is (known as) the recognition of appearances as the mind. When you analyse the nature of this mind to see if it has a going, a staying or a coming and have the insight that it cannot be established as having any of these, for the mind, like a dream-elephant or horse, ultimately has no true existence, this is the recognition of the mind as Voidness.

(Furthermore) when you have the insight that various (appearances) spontaneously arise from this state of pure clarity and Voidness, without any obstruction like (the reflections of) the moon in water, this is the recognition of Voidness as spontaneous (arisal). And concerning this spontaneously arisen clear, void awareness which is free of all mental fabrications (of extreme modes of existence), which is not something that comes about by change, which does not waver from (or in any way block) the Great Bliss and which has just spontaneously arisen—when you are convinced that it arises and subsides at exactly the same moment like the knotting and uncoiling of a snake, this is the recognition of spontaneous (arisal) as automatically subsiding of itself.

The mind you are to be made to recognise is normal consciousness which can think up anything and everything, is all-aware and all-flexible. It itself is known as the unity of clarity and Voidness, the Great Bliss, the Voidness possessing that which is perpetually supreme, or Mahāmudrā, the Great Seal of Voidness. When you recognise it, this is known as the insight of Mahāmudrā. Therefore place your mind in its own state of vivid awareness without anything to meditate on and without letting it wander for even an instant. Relax and be at ease without any expectations or worries, hopes that your meditation will be good or fears that it will be bad. By cultivating the natural state of your normal consciousness, you will behold in the very instant of here and now the Mahāmudrā Great Seal of Voidness, the unity of bliss and Voidness and (you will see it) like the clear expanse of cloudless space.

Now that mental quiescence has been joined with penetrative insight, sublime experiences and insights will happen. This fulfils the requirement of actually having entered the path of Liberation. Voidness is the way the mind is, clarity is its defining characteristic and the unity of these is the mind's nature. (There are many names for) this clear, vivid brilliance with a nature of bliss, clarity and bare (non-conceptuality), which is free of all extremes of mentally fabricated (modes of existence) such as good or bad, arising, ceasing or enduring, existing or not existing, permanent or impermanent and which is beyond all words and thoughts, which cannot be identified (as this or that) and yet can be experienced. It is known as the very essence of great pristine awareness, the reality of the great natural occurrence, the abiding nature of the way in which all knowables exist, pure awareness, the very nature of things, the equal factor (of saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa), the Great Bliss, the Buddha-nature, the perfection of wisdom, omniscience, the Voidness possessing that which is perpetually supreme.

Because everything can be understood by the mind, it is (called) mind-only. Because it is free of all extremes or middle, it is Madhyamaka, the Great Central position. Because it is difficult for everyone to comprehend, it is the hidden, or secret tantra. Because it destroys all deceptions, it is the Vajrayāna Diamond-hard Vehicle. Because it beholds the essence of Buddhahood, it is called the Dharmakāya.

In short, what you must recognise is that which is free from all mental fabrications that would grasp at a duality (of truly existent consciousness and objects), in other words the pristine awareness of non-duality, the equal factor (of saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa), the Great Bliss free from mental fabrications, the Mahāmudrā Great Seal of Voidness. Furthermore, you should float above (the ocean of saṁsāra) on your fervent regard and loving respect (for your Guru) which you take as what is most vital. Then circle continually in making requests (to him for inspiration) without ever feeling you have done enough. And then alight upon an obvious placing of his inspiration and blessings on you.

When you recognise that there is this stark brilliance as part of yourself, unobstructed, unhidden, free from being unobvious, you have arrived at the Mahāmudrā that is the basis. To look at the nature (of the mind) is the Mahāmudrā that is the path. To realise (this nature) with full conviction is the Mahāmudrā that is the result. Therefore joyfully cultivate yourself in this way.

Now the attainment of a (fully endowed) human body has become meaningful. You have actually entered the path of Liberation and made saṁsāra have an end. Therefore meditate well and with joy, and cultivate this for a long time. That is extremely important. Having looked at the settled and moving minds and been introduced (to their actual natures), you have recognised that appearances are the mind, the mind is Voidness, Voidness is spontaneous (arisal) and spontaneous (arisal) automatically subsides of itself. This is Mahāmudrā, pointing a finger at the Dharmakāya. Cultivate its practice continually. Follow it through to the end. Without leaving it as only a (dry) intellectual understanding, be certain to place it on your mind-stream. That is the eighth point (for penetrative insight meditation).

Summary

This has been the actual body of the text, the introduction to mental quiescence and penetrative insight. First you should focus on looking (at the nature of mind) and then gradually you will be made to recognise it in accordance with how (your experiences) develop and your understanding of them. It will all be correlated. In other (texts), there may be introductions in accordance with each way in which (experiences) may arise and be understood, and that is all right. But here I have correlated (the introduction) in accordance with the (four) ways of looking and not relied on just amassing many words. These introductions, which accord with true insights and reach to the true meaning, must be correlated and applied by each person individually to his own account and progressive insights. What I have written is in accordance with the general way in which (experiences) develop and achievements are made.

If from the beginning you were to be introduced to the nature (of the mind before you were ready), the introduction might have jaded you. If someone familiar with the Dharma becomes jaded, it is questionable whether (experiences and insights) will develop on his mind-stream. Therefore I have organised the way the introduction should be made like this in order to eliminate that (danger). This concludes the actual body of the practice.

Part Four:

ENHANCING YOUR PRACTICE

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Combining Mahāmudrā with Other Practices and the Four Activities

The third section is the concluding material, dealing with enhancing (your practice). In your meditation session (of single-minded concentration) have your mindfulness keep a check so that you have no mental wandering. If (your thoughts become completely) spread out, place (your meditation) aside (and take a rest). In your post-meditation period, if you lapse into mental wandering, alternate it more with meditation sessions in which you cultivate having your mind not wander.

> Thus you must gauge yourself and know when to take a rest if you are pushing yourself too hard in meditation and when you meditate if your mind becomes too scattered during daily activity. Through such skilful alternation you will enhance your development of the Mahāmudrā realisation at all times.

When thinking about death and impermanence, you should have a state of mind that thinks, "As for death, my own combined body, speech and mind are going to die". Then (on top of this) you should recognise the nature of death and of the mind that thinks of death and thus become liberated from grasping for (truly existing) permanence and impermanence, which are nothing but mentally labelled (categories made) by the mind. Likewise when thinking about all the disadvantages of saṁsāra or cyclic existence, you should come to realise that saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa are like far and near mountains in a dream.

> With such practices you enhance your realisation of the

simultaneity of the two levels of truth. On the relative or conventional level you have death, impermanence, the suffering of saṁsāra and so forth, all of which are deceptive appearances nevertheless experienced as such. On the ultimate level the mode of existence of these appearances is Voidness; they lack true inherent existence. The two levels of truth, relative and ultimate, appearance and Voidness, are inseparable. You need the simultaneous realisation of both like two wings in order to fly. Do not go to either extreme that appearances are totally non-existent or that they truly exist. The former is nihilism or grasping at Voidness, the latter is the extreme of affirmation, grasping at true existence. No amount of realisation of Voidness should make you less mindful of the common preliminaries such as death meditation.

Furthermore, when you meditate on love and compassion based on the realisation that all sentient beings have been your mothers and fathers, and likewise when you meditate on the wishing and venturing states of the Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta up until your attainment of the Enlightened Mind, you should recognise the nature of all these. Placing yourself in an uncontrived state, settle into a state of realisation having an outstanding (relative) Bodhicitta as its aspect and (an understanding of) the nature (of this aspect, ultimate Bodhicitta) which is unmanufactured and free of all mental fabrications (of extreme modes of existence). Doing this is the inseparability of Voidness and compassion.

Love is the wish for everyone to be happy and compassion for them to be free of suffering. As you have undergone beginningless rebirth, at some point everyone has been your mother or father. Remembering their kindness and wishing to repay it, you should develop the wishing state of Bodhicitta, the thought to attain Buddhahood in order to be most effectively able to help them. The venturing state of Bodhicitta is to engage in the practices that will bring you Enlightenment, such as the perfections of generosity, moral discipline, patience, enthusiastic perseverance, meditative concentration, discriminating awareness and so forth. All this is relative Bodhicitta. Ultimate Bodhicitta is the realisation of Voidness.

What is required is to have a simultaneous realisation of relative and ultimate Bodhicitta in the same manner as the two levels of truth. Just as when meditating on Guru-yoga you visualise your Guru in the form or aspect of Buddha Vajradhāra while having the nature of your root Guru, you do the same here. Have the aspect or form of your meditation be compassion, while realising its nature as Voidness. This is the way to develop the realisation of the inseparability of compassion and Voidness.

Also, when of the four tantric initiations you receive the vase empowerment, you are then permitted to do the practices of the development stage and visualise yourself as a deity. Now when you think of yourself as any of the four major meditational deities and you achieve clarity in your meditation of the environment and all beings in it as deities and all sounds as mantra, take a look at the nature of this. To practise in a state of unity of the development and completing stages, free from all thoughts (of true existence) is the Mahāmudrā of the development stage.

There are many tantric meditation deities or yidams such as Heruka or Cakrasaṁvara, Hevajra, Guhyasamāja and Kālacakra. On the development stage you visualise yourself as such deities, your environment as their maṇḍala celestial abodes, your speech as their mantra, your thoughts as pristine awareness, your actions as the enlightened activity of their virtuous conduct and so forth. This is to eliminate your compulsive grasping at ordinary appearances and your holding them to be truly and inherently existent.

The completing stage, according to the Mahāmudrā classification scheme, is divided into the stage having signs and that without signs. The former refers to the meditations on the energy-systems of the subtle body within the context of the development stage visualisations and are done to channelise all the energy-winds into the central channel for the blissful realisation of Voidness. The latter refers to the Mahāmudrā meditations done in this state.

In meditation, to have the clear appearance or aspect of a deity or mantra, while realising its Void nature is known as combining the development and completing stages or the mixture of Mahāmudrā with the development stage. Whatever you visualise is the inseparable union of appearance and Voidness.

Then you should meditate by applying the Clear Light. To recognise the self-nature (of reality) at all times, whether walking, lying, sitting or talking, is the mixture (of everything) with Mahāmudrā.

You should apply the Clear Light realisation of everything as a dream to whatever you do. If in a dream you realise you are dreaming, you can then take full control of your dream. You can fly or do whatever you wish. Likewise your waking stage is but a deceptive dream. When you realise that nothing has true inherent existence, there is no limit to what you can do. With absolute conviction in inseparable Voidness and appearance, free from the slightest doubt, you will no longer be restricted by ignorance and can take control of the elements and so forth.

Further, to practice single-pointedly in a state of inseparable development and completing stages or mental quiescence and penetrative insight is (called the activity that is) all-good. When this has become stable, you may then conceal yourself in fearsome solitary places and with awareness follow the view, meditations and activities. To practise like this is called the secret activity.

Secret activity is to go to such places as cemetaries, deserts or lonely mountains, and sleep with your head on a corpse or out in the wild. This is to check yourself to see if superstitions and deluded states of mind still arise and to be able to examine them if and when they do. To attempt such activity without having achieved inseparable mental quiescence and penetrative insight is insane and there is the danger that you might go crazy. Therefore extreme caution is required.

When you have become very stable in this, with no mental wandering, you may then roam about and mix in large crowds. To take this as a path and practice is called the activity of being in crowds.

This is a similar type of practice to the previous one in the sense that it is intended as an opportunity to check your progress and examine the delusions, attachment and aversions that arise in noisy, crowded, chaotic situations.

According to differences (of which of these situations your mind) is stable in and which it is not, there are three (types of people): great, middling and little.

Some people can handle being alone but are unable to cope with crowds and busyness. Others thrive in activity with others, but cannot bear loneliness or being alone. It is essential to be able to be in any situation with combined mental quiescence and penetrative insight.

There is no specific sign (differentiating) those who are great. But when they reach the great path of preparation and practise with the emanation of appearances, they adopt the costume of Heruka and mix in fearsome circumstances with no thoughts whatsoever of what is to be eaten or not, what is clean or dirty or what is faulty or correct. Practising in this way, they progress gradually through the path of preparation, and when they reach the path of seeing they gain victory on their own part over demonic impulses of Māra, delusions and Hīnayāna (motivations). Thus (it is called the activity bringing) victory over all directions.

According to the general Mahāyāna description, there are five progressive paths on the way to Enlightenment. With the development of Bodhicitta you enter the first of these, the path of accumulation on which you develop mental quiescence. On the second path of preparation you perfect penetrative insight so that on the path of seeing you gain in your meditation session a bare non-conceptual understanding of Voidness. At this point you enter the first of the ten Bodhisattva stages (bhūmis). During the fourth path of meditation you further meditate in order to eliminate the obstacles preventing you from seeing Voidness at all times. At the path of no more learning you attain the enlightened state of a Buddha.

Heruka is a general term for any male meditational deity, or can refer specifically to Cakrasaṁvara. Those of greatest capacity, such as Tilopa and Nāropa, adopt the bone jewellery and tiger-skin costume of a Heruka when on the path of preparation. They act like crazy men, eating anything that comes their way, not unlike the pig. There are many stories of Mahāsiddhas, greatly realised masters, who would eat refuse or fish entrails. Practising in this way, they gained victory over all superstitions, preconceptions and grasping at inherent existence, known collectively as "the Māra demons". This is an extremely advanced practice to be able to gain bare perception of Voidness.

As for the side of others, they work extremely extensively for the sake of sentient beings while engaged in the activity of being in crowds. Therefore this activity is also known as progressing with Mahāmudrā itself.

For those who are exceptionally sharp-witted, there is no need to enhance (their practice), for they are in (the Enlightened state of the Dharmakāya) in which there is no longer anything to meditate upon or anyone to meditate. For those who are not like this, there are many methods to enhance (their practice) which they should learn from the mouths of their Guru. (General) methods to enhance your practice, however, are alternating your meditation and post-meditation periods, practising the path of the common vehicle (meditating on impermanence and so forth in terms of Mahāmudrā), pursuing tantric methods (in terms of Mahāmudrā), and engaging in the four types of activities (that which is all-good and so forth). To exert effort and practise in this way is the first point for enhancing (your practice).

The Five Distorted Views, Three Skills and Four Buddha Bodies

Furthermore, to eliminate interferences you should separate yourself from compulsive attraction to such things as virtuous and non-virtuous objects.

> Conventionally, it is true that certain actions are virtuous and others not. But ultimately these things have no true, inherent existence as such. If you regard certain actions as inherently "good" and are compulsively attracted to them, or others as "sinful" and are repulsed, such grasping will impede your progress.

Also, as the three times (past, present and future) cannot be established (as having true, inherent existence), you must abandon even the thought, "I shall work from this very moment until my attainment of Enlightenment." Become certain that there is (instantaneous) Enlightenment in each instant.

> Conventionally, there is past, present and future. But if these categories had true, inherent existence as such, then the past would always have been in the past and could never have happened. The future would always be yet to come and could never occur. And the present would be ever so and never cease. Therefore, although it is imperative to have a Bodhicitta motivation, and should not conceive of working from now until Enlightenment when this is based on an idea of your being in a truly existent moment now and Enlightenment as being somewhere "out there" in the truly existent remote future.
>
> By the very fact that thoughts arise and dissolve in exactly

the same moment, Enlightenment is in each instant. If you are aware of this, that is referred to as "instantaneous Enlightenment". In other Buddhist vehicles, you attain Enlightenment by a long, drawn-out process of collecting merit over three countless eons. To be sure, the realisation of Voidness and Enlightenment are the result of accumulated merit, but as the mind controls the body and speech, Mahāmudrā meditation on the mind is a peerless vehicle for accumulating enormous merit quickly. Instantaneous or instant Enlightenment does not mean that ignorance is eliminated magically from no cause and that you do not need to practise virtue, meditate or do anything in order to become Enlightened. It means that in each instant you can be Enlightened if you are aware of the true abiding nature of reality in that moment. And if you are not, you remain in saṁsāra.

Do not hold your mind as being vulgar and ordinary. Recognise that from time immemorial it has been of the nature of the five pristine awarenesses.

Pristine awareness is of the inseparability of appearance and Voidness, of the two levels of truth, of the abiding nature of reality. It is the natural condition of your mind and has five aspects or functions, known as the five types of pristine awareness. When you are unaware of them and overlay them with grasping at true existence, they are the major delusions.

Pristine awareness of the void nature of reality correctly discriminates between what is false and true. Overlaid with grasping for true existence, you wish to be rid of objects to which you ascribe such existence and thus you have anger. Unaware of the pristine awareness that is like a mirror you closed-mindedly shroud yourself and ignore certain objects rather than clearly reflecting their appearance, and thus you have closed-minded ignorance. Unaware of the pristine awareness that sees the individual nature of things as void, you single out certain objects as more desirable by nature than others. This is longing desire. Unaware of the pristine awareness that sees the equality of things in inseparable Voidness and appearance and so forth, you consider yourself better than others and thus have pride. Unaware of the pristine awareness that effortlessly accomplishes everything, you are obsessed with others' and do nothing for yourself. This is jealousy. Or you keep possessions to yourself and do not share or let things flow. This is miserliness. When you see, however, that the nature of the various delusions is the same as that of the five pristine awarenesses—and as all five are complete in each one, there can be many such lists of correlations—you transform the former into the latter.

Do not hold your own aggregates, cognitive spheres and bases as unclean. Become certain that from time immemorial they have been the male and female meditational deities and the male and female Bodhisattvas.

The aggregate physical and mental faculties are that of form, feelings, recognition, compositional factors and consciousness. The cognitive bases are the objects and cognitive powers of the faculties of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking. The cognitive spheres are the above bases plus the consciousness of each of these faculties.

In various tantras there are numerous systems of correspondence, equating each of the above with a male or female meditational figure. One such system of a hundred deities is found in the "Tibetan Book of the Dead (B'ar-d'o t'ö-dr'öl)". At the time of death, these deities are revealed and they appear clearly. If you recognise them for what they are, you can gain liberation, but if you are frightened you will rush into one of the unfortunate rebirth states.

Abandon the wish to become liberated merely from hearing and thinking (about the teachings). Resolve to become liberated from (the additional) force of meditation and the blessings of the Guru.

In order to train your mind and overcome suffering, you must rely on the powers of hearing, thinking and meditating. You must first hear a correct explanation of the teachings, on the nature of the mind for instance, and then think about them in order to ascertain their meaning. The latter is like looking at the mind and subjecting it to endless questions and logical analysis. Finally, when you have reached a decision about the nature of the mind, you must meditate and actually experience it to be so. Through the help of your Guru you come to recognise it from your meditation. Thus all three are needed to become enlightened.

In other words, abandon the five distorted ideas about objects, time, the nature (of your delusions), the way (your aggregates) are and the discriminating awarenesses (that come from hearing, thinking and meditating).

To have your body in the essential posture and your mind initially placed in single-minded concentration, having looked at the nature of the settled mind when it is settled and of the moving mind when it is moving, is called skill at the beginning of meditation. To rid yourself of fatigue (by taking a rest) when the unity of your single-pointed concentration and essential bodily posture has become so spread apart they have separated is called skill intermediately in cutting off becoming diffused. Not to be obsessed or attracted no matter what excellent boons arise (such as bliss, clarity or bare non-conceptuality) is called skill at the end in cultivating the boons. You should train yourself in these three skills.

The four Buddha bodies can be understood in terms of the mind.

The various appearances to and of the mind are the Nirmāṇakāya or Emanation Body. Its awareness is the Saṁbhogakāya or Utility Body. Its Voidness is the Svabhāvakāya or Nature Body and the inseparability (of the three) is the Dharmakāya or Body of Truth.

Very often, the definitions of the Dharmakāya and Svabhāvakāya are reversed. A famous analogy for understanding these bodies is that the Dharmakāya is like space, the Saṁbhogakāya like the moon and the Nirmāṇakāya like the reflection of that moon in water. All three are totally interdependent and inseparable. You cannot have the moon without the space it occupies and there can be no reflection independent of the moon. Likewise inseparable and interdependent are the Voidness, awareness and appearance of the mind.

When you have definitely decided that this is the way that all things are—appearance, existence, saṁsāra, Nirvāṇa—and have ascertained that all things are isolated from all extremes of mentally fabricated modes of existence and are free of (inherent) arising, ceasing and enduring, then place your mind single-pointedly in a state free of all expectations and worries and of all abandoning and adopting. That is the second point (for enhancing your practice).

The Three Places Where You Can Deviate and the Four Where You can Lose Voidness

Furthermore, because you will deviate into Three Realms if you are obsessed with the three (boons) of bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality, do not hold these boons as supreme, no matter what arises, good or bad.

> If you are obsessed with the boon of bliss and grasp at it to have true existence, you will be reborn as a god in the Desire Realm; if with clarity, in the Form Realm; and if obsessed with are non-conceptuality, in the Formless Realm.

Once you have ascertained (Voidness) through the insight that things are inherently neither one nor many (for instance that the mind and the body are neither totally the same nor completely different), you might think that everything by nature is a total nothingness or that the intellectually derived mere negation which refutes true existence is the Voidness of everything (and that nothing exists even conventionally). If you make this your meditation, you have lost Voidness with respect to its actual nature. Because you might become wild (having no belief) in cause and effect you must abandon meditations that grasp at everything as being totally non-existent and those that are on such an intellectually formulated Voidness. Look at the nature of this grasping at total non-existence and then be contrived (without intellectually formulating anything).

> If you look at the nature of the thought that grasps at non-existence, it will automatically subside and dissolve in its own

> place in the same manner as any other thought. The nature of all thoughts, even subtle ones such as grasping, is a clear, vivid awareness.

When you do not have the insight that all things are void—both the (delusions) to be abandoned as well as their opponents (namely Voidness)—then when many delusions or bad thoughts arise on your mind-stream, you might take them as your enemy thinking, "These are killing my (chance for) Liberation". Then thinking, "These should be destroyed by Voidness", you hold these two as a (truly existent) thing to be abandoned (on the one hand, and on the other a truly existent) thing to help. To meditate on Voidness like this is to lose Voidness with respect to its being an opponent. Recognise the nature of the very thought that grasps at the delusions or what is to be abandoned and the helper (Voidness) as being separate in nature, and place yourself in a state in which there is nothing truly existent to refute or establish.

When you do not have the insight that the basis (namely the abiding nature of reality), the path (or meditation on that nature) and the result (the realisation of the Dharmakāya) are all three Void (by nature), you might think that Voidness is the supreme path for attaining Buddhahood (and does not apply as well to the basis and the result). You might also think that if you understand (Voidness) it is the supreme path and that except for this, all the other Buddhist paths (such as the Hīnayāna meditations on the Four Noble Truths) are inferior. Not to think of these other paths as belonging to the methods (taught by Buddha), is to lose Voidness with respect to its being a path. Recognise the nature of the very thought that is obsessed with Voidness and that grasps at it as being the supreme path. By looking you will realise that everything is void (the basis, path, as well as the result) and that in Voidness there is no supreme or inferior, nothing to be abandoned or to help.

> The next place where you can lose Voidness is when doing the tantric development stage practices of dissolving everything into Voidness with a mantra before visualising a meditational deity.

If you have no solid experience (of Voidness) you might imagine an intellectually formulated (mental image of) Voidness or its mantra spreading out over everything (as if it were a thing). Then because you exclusively thought that everything is this Voidness or that nothing could be established (conventionally) since everything is void, you might discard karma and the law of cause and effect, thinking, "What can come of virtuous actions which are (only) conditioned phenomena." This is losing Voidness with respect to spreading it out (as if it were a thing). Look at the very thought that thinks "This is Voidness" and once you have recognised its nature, place yourself single-pointedly on the actual void nature of Voidness itself and have no thoughts (of a vacuum, for instance, thinking "is Voidness".)

These intellectually formulated ideas of Voidness, however, are not totally improper under all circumstances. If beginners do not meditate with intellectual formulations (and logical reasonings), they will be unable to gain the insight of Voidness even if they are taught it from the beginning. But, by familiarising themselves with Voidness (conceptually), they will ultimately gain an effortless (non-conceptual) insight into Voidness. Therefore even meditating on an intellectually formulated Voidness can be permitted. However, ultimately (such a conceptual understanding) must be abandoned since it can be a place for losing Mahāmudrā.

> A beginner refers to anyone who has not yet achieved the path of seeing and its bare non-conceptual perception of Voidness, in other words anyone who is not an Ārya. If someone has collected an enormous amount of merit in his previous lifetimes, he may "skip ahead" and gain such bare perception

immediately upon meditation. This is rare. The more usual process is as follows.

First you develop a presumptive understanding of Voidness based on hearing a correct explanation. Presumption is reaching a correct conclusion either for a wrong reason or even a right one but which you do not understand. Your Guru teaches you about Voidness and although you do not really understand what he has said, you repeat his words and have an idea of Voidness based on hearsay.

Next, by repeatedly thinking about and logically analysing what he has said, you gain a valid inferential understanding of Voidness based on the intellectual, conceptual process of logical reasoning. By repeating this logical process and focusing on Voidness by mixing your actual understanding of it with an auxiliary conceptual one, such as the mental image of space or a vacuum, so that you have a more readily accessible object for concentration on Voidness, you will eventually achieve its bare, non-conceptual perception. This comes about not by a mystic leap of faith, but through the law of cause and effect as the result of your accumulation of merit. Therefore a mental image of Voidness such as one of a vacuum and a conceptual understanding based on logic are necessary aids for the full realisation of Voidness. But they must ultimately be abandoned, for they tend to make a ''thing'' out of Voidness, which it is not, and can be a place for losing it such as when spreading out an intellectually formulated image of a Voidness as if it were a thing.

These, then, are the four places where you can lose (Voidness). Because they are interferences (to proper Mahāmudrā meditation), you must not confuse what is to be abandoned and adopted in accordance with (these teachings). Then in this state, without any presumptive understanding (of Voidness), place your attention uncontrivedly on whatever arises. Do not stray from the here and now. Be fluid and flowing without holding your body in a severe posture or holding your breath and so forth.

Such methods, as found in the "Six Yogas of Nāropa", are useful for achieving the Mahāmudrā insight, but once achieved are no longer needed.

Whatever thoughts arise—virtuous, non-virtuous or unspecified—do not block them or establish (their cessation), do not abandon (them) or adopt (opponents). Whatever arises, do not follow out, but rather place your attention on it without any grasping. That is the third point (for enhancing your practice).

The Danger Points Where Things May Arise as an Enemy and Other Interferences

Furthermore, suppose you are feeling self satisfied and happy that thoughts and delusions (are not interrupting) your meditation. Then all of a sudden many rough thoughts upset you violently and you cannot bring them under control in meditation. You might regard these thoughts as enemies that have arisen. Try to recognise these very thoughts and the nature of these very thoughts. Do not regard them as faults, but think of them with kindness.

> For instance, if a thought of anger arises, regard it as an opportunity to cultivate patience or, if of desire, to meditate on the impermanence of what you want. Ultimately, however, if you merely focus on them, they will naturally subside.

Taking them into the sphere of your meditation, see that their nature is free of all mentally fabricated (extreme modes of existence) and that they arise (as the play) of the Dharmakāya. Cultivate (the insight) that they are like this.

Suppose that previously whatever delusions arose, you were able to wipe them off by (an intellectually formulated analysis of) Voidness.

> This refers to being able to eliminate a delusion through a logical intellectually formulated analysis of its Voidness. For instance, if you desire a person or an object and after analysing whether it is the same or different from its parts, you conclude that it is neither and therefore lacks true existence, your desire will fall apart as you see there is no solid, concrete object for it.

But then all of a sudden without any control (another) delusion arises such as longing desire. You might regard such a delusion as an enemy that has arisen. For this, whatever delusions arise, recognise their nature. By placing yourself in (a state of) neither blocking (them) nor establishing (their cessation), they become purified (and subside) in their own place without your needing to abandon them. In other words, go into their own purity as is explained in the (methods for) taking thoughts as a path, namely (focus on) the void nature of the outstanding aspect (or appearance of the thought) which is blissful, clear and non-conceptually bare. Cultivate yourself in this way.

When you search for the mind by analysis and see that it cannot be found and that all things cannot be established as truly existent, you might then discard (the conventional existence of) everything, what is to be abandoned and what is to help, what is virtuous and what is not. Taking the experienced boon of bareness as the main thing, you might feel that yourself and all others have disappeared into a vacuum and therefore you should do nothing. Such grasping at Voidness is known as Voidness having arisen as an enemy or as spreading blackness all around.

> Both the extremes of existence and non-existence must be refuted. But if you had to choose, it is better to fall to the former rather than to nihilism. Nāgārjuna has said that Voidness refutes all true existence, but if you do not understand it, it is better to understand phenomena. Consider the example of a snake. If you say it is void and nothing, and do not respect its relative nature, it may bite you and you will die. Likewise you can fall to a lower rebirth in a hell from disregarding the fact non-virtuous actions bring unfortunate results.

For this as well, you should recognise the nature of the grasping at Voidness itself. Placing yourself in a state of neither blocking nor establising (its cessation), you will eliminate (such grasping). Therefore place your single-minded concentration like that.

In other words, in the same manner as before, focus on the nature of the thought that grasps at Voidness or nihilism, and it will naturally subside.

Even though you have an (intellectual) understanding that appearances are dependent arisings, you might still be obsessively attracted to these void (appearances) grasping at them to be truly existent things. If this is the case, you will become up-tight and will either be frightened or enticed by the various appearances you see. For someone unhappy and on edge like this, this (paranoid state of mind) is known as appearances having arisen as an enemy. For this you should recognise the nature of the appearances and of the grasping at them to be truly existent things. Placing yourself in a state of neither blocking them nor trying to establish (their cessation), you will eliminate them.

You might have a presumptive, intellectual understanding that, for instance, a father and son are interdependent: you cannot have a son without a father, and so forth. Yet you may still grasp at them to exist inherently as dependent arisings. From such grasping, objects may begin to appear as enemies. To hell creatures suffering from extreme paranoia, everyone is seen as their enemy and every object is a weapon.

A classic example is of the tailor who lost his needle and, feeling that he had swallowed it, developed an acute stomach ache. His friend saw that he had merely dropped the needle on the ground, but could not convince him that this was his lost needle. He therefore suggested that the tailor move his bowels. He did and the friend discreetly placed the needle in the stool. As soon as the tailor saw the needle, his stomach ache miraculously disappeared. Likewise when you see the true nature of your grasping at appearances, they and your suffering will disappear.

When you have been meditating like this, even if you develop (emotional) faith, compassion and so forth more than others these will dissolve in their own place (being unstable), if they have not been purified with the Mahāmudrā (understanding of the inseparability of compassion and Voidness). Suppose you develop (emotional) compassion towards someone else who does not have any such good Dharma qualities and in your present (emotional) state you think it would be very beneficial to help him. Although this would not bring about (any ultimate benefit), if you were to drop your own good Dharma qualities and were actually to try to help him, then compassion has arisen as an enemy.

> An example is suppose you see a hunter who is having difficulty killing a deer and, feeling compassion for this cruel person, you decide to help him. If you were to give up your own compassion for animals and your vow not to kill, and help him shoot the beast, then emotional compassion has arisen as an enemy.

For this also, you should recognise the (nature of this) attitude of emotional compassion. Placing yourself in a state of neither blocking nor establishing (its cessation), become clear about the nature of this strong compassion in terms of Mahāmudrā. Then by offering extensive prayers (for the sake of all others) while in this state, you will eliminate the (compassion's) arising as an enemy and bring about the other person's benefit in accordance with interdependent origination.

> Being able effortlessly to help others comes about due to cause and effect as the result of your prayers to be able to do so, as well as from your joint realisation of compassion and Voidness. While you are working towards Enlightenment, it is essential to have compassion and help others, but you must use wisdom.
>
> There is a great difference between a Bodhisattva using unconventional behaviour to help someone because he sees what will be ultimately beneficial and a beginner with no realisation who, being very emotional, helps others in a bungling fashion which does not really benefit the other person and only harms his own practice. Do not presume to be a Bodhisattva when you are not and use compassion as an excuse

to act impetuously on your emotions. But of course if someone is about to fall, you should help him. You must use common-sense.

Furthermore, suppose you had not ascertained the correct view (of Voidness), but felt that by learning (first) grammar, logic and so forth in great detail you would thereby gain insight into the correct primordial view. If you were then to give up meditating, this is known as cause and effect arising as an enemy.

> It is incorrect to feel that the result of learning worldly sciences will be your understanding of Voidness. It is the other way round. When you have gained insight into Voidness, all other knowledge and wisdom will follow. This does not mean, however, that you should not study anything until you gain the full realisation of Voidness, but you should keep your priorities straight.

For this you should exert effort in (ascertaining) the correct view and meditate upon it. By cultivating this without any expectations or worries, you will eliminate (this hindrance). Therefore you should practise like this.

In addition, whenever sickness, harm from spirits and such interferences to single-minded concentration as mental dullness, agitation and foggy-mindedness arise—whichever it may be, examine its individual nature (to see) if it has a colour, shape or an arising, enduring and going. Without blocking them or establishing (their cessation) conclude that they cannot be established as having true, inherent existence.

Also practise giving away (your happiness) and taking on (the suffering of others). Without any expectations or worries, fearing that you will actually become sick or hoping you will benefit (the other person), practise by taking sickness and harm from spirits as (a path for realising) the four Buddha bodies.

> The Voidness of the sickness is the Svabhāvakāya, the

> clarity and awareness of its pain the Saṁbhogakāya, its form the Nirmāṇakāya and the inseparability of the three the Dharmakāya.

As for mental dullness and agitation, if you become dull with respect to objects and so forth in your daily activities, use mental agitation as a method (to perk you up) and for agitation use dullness as a method (to calm you down).

> These are temporary remedies and are like Sāntideva's advice in the "Bodhicaryāvatāra" to use jealousy as an opponent for pride and so forth. If you feel pride, place yourself in someone else's shoes and feel jealousy for yourself. In this way you will curb your pride. Likewise if you have mental dullness, incite some agitation to bring yourself to a balanced state.

Furthermore, if you look at the nature of mental dullness and agitation and place yourself single-mindedly on it, they will be eliminated.

Although there are many such eliminations of interferences, I have not written them all for fear that this would become too wordy. These should be learned from the mouth of your Guru. Also, for those of sharpest wits there is no need to eliminate interferences for they have the insight that everything is primordially free of all mental fabrications (of extreme modes of existence).

These danger points (of thoughts, delusions and so forth arising as enemies) occur at the time when you are on the stage called "of a single taste."

> This stage is after you have become an Ārya with bare non-conceptual perception of Voidness and while you are on the first seven Bodhisattva stages on the path of meditation. In other words, they occur when you have already seen Voidness, but because of your instincts of delusion and ignorance, disturbing thoughts and grasping continue to arise, particularly during your post-meditational period.

In terms of Mahāmudrā it is said that these (delusions and so forth continuing to arise are due to) instincts of delusion and thoughts strung on your mind-stream and when they give rise (to delusions and so forth), they should be taken as signs (of the Nirmāṇakāya) to be wiped clean by Voidness.

> A rosary is made of beads, yet, none of the beads are the rosary, neither are all the beads piled together. A rosary is a mental label or an imputation on a collection of beads strung together. Likewise what is a habit or instinct giving repeated rise to a familiar pattern of behaviour? A habit is but a mental label, an imputation on a series of similar events which, if you grasp at as being truly existent, gives chronic rise to its perpetuation.
>
> Therefore see the Voidness of your habits and instincts of delusion. When a delusion arises, understand that its form is the Nirmāṇakāya, its awareness aspect Saṁbhogakāya, its Voidness Svabhāvakāya and the inseparability of the three Dharmakāya. In this way they can be "wiped clean" by Voidness.

In terms of the general teachings of the paths and their results and so forth, common to (all traditions of Buddhism in Tibet), it is said that at the time when (you are practising) the completing stage (of anuttarayoga tantra) with signs, (all good qualities) will arise from the force of the delusions and thoughts (being blended with) those things in their category and that these will come about as a dependent arising from the combining of them with the (practices of the) energy-channels, energy-winds, creative energies and the mind.

> This refers to another level of methods used to overcome disturbing thoughts and delusions. On the completing stage of anuttarayoga tantra with signs, you deal with and harness the energy-system of the subtle body. This system includes energy-channels (nādi; tza) equivalent to the body, energy-winds (prāṇa; lung) equivalent to speech, and creative energies (bindu: t'ig-le) equivalent to the mind.
>
> Consciousness rides through this system on the energywinds

and when they run rampant so do your deluded thoughts. When these winds are channelled into the central energy-channel at the heart centre, these thoughts will automatically subside.

Furthermore, each of the delusions is homologous with a corresponding good quality. Thus there are certain practices such as the "Six Yogas of Nāropa" in which a delusion and the good quality in its category become blended and thus the energy of the delusion is effectively transformed into something useful. This occurs through dependent arising, in other words as a result of the particular practice used. Thus desire becomes blended with bliss through the psychic heat (tum-mo) practices, anger with the realisation of the lack of true independent existence through the illusory body techniques, closed-mindedness with Clear Light by means of dream yoga and so forth. Such practices utilise the energy-system outlined above.

Although there are many things such as this—the places where you can lose Voidness, the danger-points (where things can arise as your enemy), sickness, harm from spirits, interferences to single minded concentration and so forth—perhaps just this much will do as a summary. You should know in these ways the methods for eliminating such faults (from your meditation).

These, then, are the stages for eliminating the three places where you can deviate, the four places where you can lose Voidness, the five danger-points and the three interferences (to single-mindedness). Having realised the faults of these and the benefits (of eliminating them) as explained above, you should make an effort and not be confused about what should be adopted and abandoned. This is the fifth point (for enhancing your practice).

The Benefits of the Practices and the Stages and Paths According to Mahāmudrā

As for the way in which benefits (or good qualities) arise, the benefits of the preliminary practices is that it brings about the fulfilment of your temporary and ultimate aims. That is because it is suitable for them to be the basis for your attaining both a better future rebirth as well as the paths of Enlightenment.

Not only that, but by meditating on the difficulty of obtaining a fully endowed human body and on death and impermanence, you will turn your mind from thoughts of this life. By thinking about Karma and the law of cause and effect, you will gain conviction in them and the power to protect (your sworn vows of moral discipline) even at the cost of your life. By thinking about the disadvantages of saṁsāra, you will develop disgust with saṁsāra and its Three Realms. Having developed renunciation, you will wish to attain only the enlightened state of a Buddha. By meditating on love, compassion and the Enlightened Motive on love, compassion and the Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta, you will become free of your (selfish) desires for your own happiness and will have thoughts only for the welfare of sentient beings.

By making effort in the yoga of the hundred-syllable mantra (of Vajrasattva), you will receive the actual signs and those in dreams of having become purified of (having to experience) the unripened unfortunate consequences of your previously committed non-virtuous actions. By means of this, you will (easily) develop experiences and insights.

By offering the maṇḍala, your body will be blissful, your mind clear, your desires few and you will gain incalculable merit. From meditating on Guru-yoga, your fervent regard and loving respect (for your Guru) will flare up more and more. You will receive his blessings and inspiration as well as single-minded concentration. You will effortlessly develop experiences and insights. Whether or not you develop the actual practices depends on (your Guru-devotion).

As for the actual practices, the benefits of mental quiescence are that you develop faultlessly the boons of bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality. Your craving will diminish for food and clothing. Your (body) will become lustrous and shining, your mind flexible and you will attain such things as extra-sensory powers and the five eyes. Your delusions and thoughts will be outshined.

> They will be outshined by the brilliance of your mental quiescence, like the stars by the sun so that they do not appear.
>
> The five extra-sensory eyes are of (1) fleshly sight to see far distant objects, (2) celestial sight for past and future rebirths, (3) that of discriminating awareness to have bare perception of Voidness, (4) that of the Dharma to see the mental capacities of others so that you know how and what to teach them, and (5) the sight of a Buddha to understand everything omnisciently. According to the "Abhisamayā-laṁkāra" of Maitreya each of these is attained progressively on the five paths to Enlightenment.

As for the advantages of penetrative insight, those who are of sharpest wits will traverse the stages and paths (to Enlightenment) all at once. Those of middling capacity will sometimes travel them all at once and sometimes in stages, progressing in the manner of those who skip ahead. Those of least capacity progress gradually in stages, travelling in order from the stage of the beginner up to the tenth Bodhisattva stage. The way they travel is in accordance with the way they develop the four times three, or twelve yogas.

> The five paths and ten Bodhisattva stages to Enlightenment, as outlined previously, can be divided in many ways and traversed through a variety of techniques. There are the general methods of each of the classical Indian Buddhist schools and the different classes of tantras. According to the system outlined by Gam-po-pa in the "Jewel Ornament of Liberation", these stages can be divided into thirteen: the stages of wishing, fervent regard, the ten Bodhisattva ones and that of Buddhahood. In the Dzog-ch'en or Great Completion system there is yet another way of dividing them. Here in Mahāmudrā the five paths and ten stages are divided into the twelve yogas. But regardless of how the pie is cut, the basic material covered, insights gained and goal achieved is the same.

(In general when you attain mental quiescence) you can place yourself as much as you wish in a state of bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality. Although you can place yourself in such a meditational state, if sometimes (these boons) do not come even when you are meditating and at other times they do come when you are not meditating, this is (because) you have not yet gained great control over single-minded concentration. This is the early or small stage off single-pointedness. If you have a settling of the mind that is just right such that you are not disturbed by any distractions and whenever you meditate (the boons) come, then you have gained control over single-minded concentration. This is the intermediate stage of single-pointedness. If (your concentration) has no discontinuity and you are not distracted even in violent circumstances, if all your thoughts have been pacified into this state, if you are fully mixed into this state even when sleeping and if you are never separated from it in all your activities, this is the advanced or great stage of single-pointedness.

At this point because the boons will be present at all times you might gain an insight that this is the great stage of no more meditation (in other words Enlightenment). But other than being an insight that you have the boons, it is not an actual insight (into Voidness). These (stages of single-pointedness) are at the time of the paths of accumulation and preparation. Because you do not quite realise the nature of the mind, the boon with which you grasp at bareness (or blankness) is the principal feature of your mental quiescence. By cultivating for a long time not being obsessed with or attracted to this very boon, these experiences will become purified. All enduring aspects of bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality will disintegrate splitting apart, (so that this state simultaneously arises and subsides in each moment) and you then see the (ultimate) truth of the void nature of things. In other words, when (your obsession with and grasping at the true existence of the boons) has been quieted into a non-objectifying state of the triple Voidness of bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality, the true nature of awareness (or the mind) will dawn on you purely like having peeled away the skin (from a fruit) or having found a treasure.

> Here the skin is your obsession with the boons or flash experiences and your grasping at their true existence. When these disintegrate and are peeled away, you arrive at the fruit within, namely the void nature of your mind characterised by a bliss, clarity and bare non-conceptuality that, being void arises and subsides simultaneously in each moment.

This is the attainment of the Mahāyāna path of seeing and is also called the state free from mental fabrications (of extreme modes of existence). At this point, if you are still not completely separated from the vicinity of grasping at (the true existence of) blankness and being obsessed with it and if you have only just seen the true nature of the mind a little bit, this is the early stage of being free from mental fabrications. When you have purified this from its root, if your normal state of consciousness has become nonobjectifyingly resplendent in accordance with your insight, this is the intermediate stage of being free from mental fabrications. When this has become stable and you have been purified of this (state) coming easily in terms of thoughts but not coming easily in terms of appearances, then you have gained the insight that everything is void and that there is not even one thing that is not void. When you have cut all over- and under-estimations of the Voidness of all external and internal phenomena, this is the advanced stage of being free from mental fabrications.

During the post-meditation periods of these (stages), appearances seem like a mirage. You gain the insight of the true nature of Bodhicitta and abandon the eighty-two (rough delusions) that are abandoned on the path of seeing. You do not take rebirth in (the Three Realms of) cyclic existence in any (of the four ways of) being born or turn away (from such births by dying) except by the power of your prayers (to continue doing so in order to help others). This is known as the attainment of the path of seeing or of the first Bodhisattva stage called "Extremely Joyful". By cultivating this for a long time, you will progress to the stage of a single taste.

At this former stage it was still a little difficult to be in the automatically subsiding here and now in which whatever thoughts arise are a bliss that is the non-true existence or lack of true existence of all things. But when this is purified, then whether or not you are free of the mental fabrication that things are neither truly void nor non-void, it is enough (just to recognise the nature of) this very state of here and now.

> Although you must be free of all extremes such as grasping at Voidness, that is nihilism, or at non-Voidness, namely true existence, such mental fabrications are purified anyway merely by seeing the nature of the here and now in which such distorted thoughts as these simultaneously arise and subside like drawings on water.

When you have gained the insight of (the true nature of all) things then (you see that everything is of) one taste in nature and you can understand completely, either in terms of appearance or in terms of Voidness, whatever teachings of the paths there may be.

The abiding foundation of the here and now is the single taste of both appearances and Voidness in the pristine awareness of the inseparability of these two. Thus whether you are aware of an appearance or its Voidness, you see the single taste of both, namely this abiding foundation of the pristine awareness of all the teachings of the paths.

This is the early stage of single taste.

At this stage, the experience (of this single taste of appearance and Voidness) is still mixed with a portion of conviction.

This conviction is that this is the experience of the here and now, thus implying your grasping to it as a "thing".

When this is purified, then everything is mixed into the single (taste) of the pure nature of all things—including (the seeming dichotomy of) consciousness and pristine awareness as well as that of appearance and mind, without there being matter left on the outside and awareness left on the inside (as if they were of different tastes). When the equality of cyclic existence and peaceful liberation, the inseparability of saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa, appears straightforwardly, this is the intermediate stage of a single taste.

When after all things have appeared as a single taste, the single taste then reappears as many through appearances spreading out by a process of interdependent origination which is a skilful means, this is the advanced stage of a single taste.

In the dissolution process of the bodily elements as outlined previously consciousness progressively relies on less elements. Thus earth dissolves into water, meaning that consciousness can no longer rely on the solid element. Then water dissolves into fire, fire into air or energy-wind and that into space. Three stages follow this; the white, red and black experiences as the white and red creative energies or Bodhicittas fall from the crown centre, rise from the navel and meet at the heart. After this comes the Clear Light Dharmakāya experience which can be had at death, falling asleep, fainting or in advanced tantric meditations. Through this process you come to realise the single taste of everything in the Dharmakāya.

After this the re-evolution process of the elements occurs in which consciousness undergoes the black, red and white experiences and then progressively relies on the elements as energy-wind, fire, water and earth re-emerge during the process of entering the b'ar-d'o, rebirth, waking up and certain advanced tantric practices. This occurs through interdependent origination, here referring to cause and effect, and is propelled by skilful means in order to assure a form that will be beneficial to others.

To realise the single taste of appearance and Voidness through both the dissolution and re-evolution processes is the advanced stage of a single taste.

Now you have attained patience for everything since (you fully realise) there is no true arising. This covers the interval between the second and seventh Bodhisattva stages, although some authors explain that this includes the eighth as well.

There are numerous ways of defining the twelve yogas of the Mahāmudrā classification system of the paths and stages. According to the general explanations found in the works of the Third K'am-trül Rinpoche, another less complex set of definitions is as follows.

The stages of single-pointedness have the achievement of mental quiescence. At its early stage the boons appear alternately, sometimes happening and sometimes not. At the intermediate stage they come automatically and at the advanced they are mixed inseparably with Clear Light even in dreams.

The stages free of mental fabrication are free of grasping at the mind as having any of the four extreme modes of existence—true existence, total non-existence, both and neither. The extreme of both refers to grasping at phenomena to have true existence on the relative level and total non-existence ultimately. Although all phenomena have neither true nor total non-existence, the extreme of neither is to grasp conceptually at this fact as if this mode of existence were a "thing". At the early stage free of mental fabrication you realise the mind is void of inherent arising, enduring and ceasing. At the intermediate you have no grasping at either appearance or Voidness. At the advanced stage you cut off completely all over- and under-estimation of mentally fabricated modes of existence.

On the stages of a single taste, appearances and the mind become completely mixed. At the early stages all things of a dual nature mix into an equal taste of Voidness. At the intermediate, appearances and the mind are like water mixed with water. At the advanced you see the arisal of the five types of pristine awareness out of the same taste.

All such definitions are not contradictory and are based on a meditational master's personal experience.

Furthermore, although there are many distinguishing characteristics between each of the ten Bodhisattva stages, one of them is that at each of the stages you fully perfect one of the ten perfection (pāramitās). Thus on the first it is generosity and then progressively moral discipline, patience, enthusiastic perseverance, meditative concentration, discriminating wisdom, skilful means, power, prayer and pristine awareness. Discriminating wisdom (prajñā; she-rab) is of Voidness, discriminating between correct and incorrect modes of existence. Pristine awareness (jñāna; ye-she) is of the inseparability of the two levels of truth, of appearance and Voidness. Either may sometimes be loosely referred to as "wisdom".

Now the meditation and post-meditational stages become mixed. (Previously) there were still some taints of grasping at blankness during the post-meditation period. But when this is purified, everything becomes purified in the void sphere of all things in which there is nothing to be attained and no one to attain it and in which there is not even the slightest difference of wandering or not wandering (from this realisation) in the meditation and post-meditation states. When you are free from all signs of (a dualism of) what is to be meditated upon and who is meditating this is the early stage of no more meditation. This is the eighth Bodhisattva stage.

At this point it is still possible for there sometimes to arise while you are sleeping slight taints of this grasping (at signs of something to meditate upon and someone to meditate). When this is purified, and everything becomes the same as the great meditative state of pristine awareness, this is the intermediate stage of no more meditation. This is the ninth and tenth Bodhisattva stages.

Then when the sword of discriminating and pristine awareness cuts from their roots the latent obstacles preventing Omniscience (namely the instincts of all ignorance), then the mother Clear Light, which is the totally pure void sphere of all things, and the child Clear Light, which is mirror-like pristine awareness, become mixed into one. This is the full transformation into the complete Enlightenment of Buddha, the state of Unity with nothing more to be learned. It is the advanced stage of no more meditation or Buddhahood.

By travelling through the eighth, ninth and tenth Bodhisattva stages to this eleventh stage (of a Buddha), the natural purity of the primordial state which is simultaneous (sphere of Voidness and mirror-like pristine awareness) is the Dharmakāya that you have made manifest.

The Buddha bodies can be divided into two; the Dharmakāya and Rūpakāya, or the Wisdom and Form Bodies. The former is the result of a Buddha's perfect abandonment of all obstacle and fulfils his own purposes. The latter are from this perfect accomplishment of all good qualities and arise from his Bodhicitta in order to fulfil the purpose of others.

Dharmakāya is free of arising, ceasing and enduring. It is the permanent, unconditioned, naturally pure, abiding nature of the mind and all reality. The pristine awareness of the void sphere of all things sees Voidness. That which is mirror-like reflects all knowable phenomena without any obstruction. Thus the Dharmakāya's being the simultaneity of these two pristine awarenesses, the mother and child Clear Lights, is often referred to in other contexts as its being the omniscient mind of a Buddha and the Voidness of that mind.

The natural purity of thought, which is the mind (or sentient aspect) of sentient beings, is the Saṁbhogakāya that you have made manifest.

The most common sūtra definition of Saṁbhogakāya, the Utility Body, is that form Body having five certainties. It has certainty of (1) form, it always utilises a body having all hundred and twelve major and minor signs of a Buddha, (2) teachings, it always utilises the Mahāyāna teachings, (3) disciples, it always teaches to a circle of Ārya Bodhisattvas, (4) place, always in pure-land Buddha-fields and (5) time, until the end of saṁsāra. Here it is defined as the natural purity of thought. These two definitions are not incompatible.

Ārya Bodhisattvas are those with a Bodhicitta motivation who have bare, non-conceptual perception of Voidness. By the virtue of such insight, their surroundings become a pure-land Buddha-field. The natural purity of thought is something that only such beings can perceive. Therefore Saṁbhogakāya is that purity of thought or awareness as visible only to Ārya Bodhisattvas. If, however, you are confused about this natural purity, then thoughts deceive you into believing they have true existence and thus you cannot see Saṁbhogakāya.

And the natural purity of appearances as objects under the influence of circumstances is the Nirmāṇakāya that you have made manifest.

Just as if a floor of aquamarine is not polished, the reflection of the God Indra will not appear in it, likewise, if the minds of sentient beings are not pure they will not see a Buddha even if one were standing before them. Thus Nirmāṇakāya or

Emanation Bodies of a Buddha are the natural purity of appearances to the minds of ordinary beings. They appear as phenomena arising from causes and circumstances and can be classified into three categories.

Supreme Nirmāṇakāyas, such as Buddha Śākyamuni, have all the major and minor signs and enact the twelve deeds of a Buddha-descent from Tuṣita, birth in a royal family, worldly sport, renunciation, austerities, Enlightenment under the bodhi tree, turning the wheel of Dharma and so forth. If you did not have the merit and purity to see Śākyamuni as the Buddha, he would appear to you only as a tall man with big ears. If you have the purity of mind, your Guru will appear to you as a Buddha.

Ordinarily appearing Nirmāṇakāyas are emanations as monkeys, birds and so forth for specific purposes to teach specific sentient beings. Certain Nirmāṇakāyas appear as master artists, physicians, musicians and so forth to teach through their particular media. Thus the pure appearance of a Nirmāṇakāya depends on the purity of the mind of the beholder.

The effortless virtuous conduct for the sake of others done without any thought by either these three Buddha bodies or a variety of bodies is beyond all imagination. As it effortlessly fulfils the purposes of all sentient beings as extensive as the infinitude of space and does so until all of saṁsāra has been emptied, this is the ultimate good quality.

There are many ways of enumerating and defining the Buddha bodies. In general tantra teachings, the enlightened body, speech and mind are explained as Nirmāṇakāya, Saṁbhogakāya and Dharmakāya, respectively. In some systems in addition to the four usual bodies there are the Vajrakāya or Adamantine Body of the immutability of Enlightenment, the Jñanakāya or Body of Pristine Awareness and so forth. But regardless of how many bodies are described, their virtuous conduct (samudācāra; Tr'in-lä) in helping sentient beings is the same.

A Buddha is free of all thought, of all conceptual processes. He knows everything through bare perception. Thus when he helps others, he does so spontaneously without any thought. His virtuous conduct, therefore, is effortless. This is because while a Buddha was still on the paths to Enlightenment he made innumerable prayers to be able to benefit all sentient beings. His ability to do so once enlightened is the result of these prayers and requires no further conscious effort or thoughts. Just as a cloud has no thoughts to benefit crops and yet when it rains this automatically happens, likewise a Buddha benefits all beings.

There are several aspects of a Buddha's virtuous conduct, known as liberation through seeing, through hearing, recalling and being touched. Thus by merely seeing a Buddha, hearing his words, recalling them or being touched by his hand, you can become liberated from suffering. This does not mean that this comes about magically and you need not do anything on your own part. Such an instantaneous liberation may occur in extremely rare cases due to the person's enormous previous accumulation of merit. But more usually such a seeing and so forth plants a seed of karmic association with Enlightenment and inspires you to strive towards this state.

All such things happen, however, with no conscious effort on the part of the Buddha. For instance, the mere sight of His Holiness the Dalai Lama can fill you with inspiration to practise the Dharma, with His Holiness not needing to do anythng on his part. The stūpa or monument in Bodh Gayā where Śākyamuni Buddha manifested Enlightenment has no thoughts and makes no efforts, yet most people who see it are moved to circumambulate it and inspired to religious thoughts.

The classic example for how liberation through seeing and hearing operate are in terms of the god Indra. Indra sits in his heavenly crystal palace and without doing anything his appearance is reflected on all the facets of its walls. People on earth see his beautiful reflection and are inspired to work to achieve his state. Likewise, Indra has a heavenly drum, the sound of which is so moving that people develop profound insights from merely hearing it.

Thus just as the sun and moon have no intentions to benefit people, a Buddha fulfils the aims of others effortlessly through his virtuous conduct and without any thought.

These, then, are the benefits derived from the preliminary practices all the way up to the stage of no more meditation. If you exert effort in developing these (attainments) one after the other, not letting the ones you have developed decline but ever increasing them, these benefits will come about. Increasing your enthusiasm like this and practising is the sixth point (for enhancing your practice).

Concluding Definitions

Therefore, ultimately and primordially from the beginning everyone has their own share of what is known as the very nature of the mind itself, the very nature of things or the Mahāmudrā Great Seal of Voidness and (there is no difference) except for whether or not you realise its two purities.

The very nature of the mind itself is also known as the Buddha-nature. Its two purities are the natural one of this abiding nature—it is primordially pure from time immemorial—and the purity achieved when the fleeting taints obscuring it have been removed. This is like polished gold having the two-fold purity of its natural condition as well as that achieved when all tarnish has been removed.

That which each being possesses as his share is the basis (Mahāmudrā). On (the basis of) this you place yourself into the meditations on the paths, and the very nature of the mind itself during the period up to the tenth Bodhisattva stage is the path (Mahāmudrā). Then when you have awakened from the sleep of unawareness or ignorance, the realised ultimate pure nature of reality is known as the fruit Mahāmudrā.

The basis, path and fruit Mahāmudrās are interdependent and cannot exist alone, just as is the case with a child, adult and old man. You cannot be an old man if you have never been a child or an adult. Likewise the fruit Mahāmudrā comes about through the basis and path ones.

To see the actual pure abiding nature of reality and be free of all (notions of) objects to be grasped and consciousness to grasp them is the (Mahāmudrā) view. To meditate on the meaning of this (view) without any mental wandering is (Mahāmudrā) meditation.

> You need a unity of correct view and meditation. To have the latter without the former is like being a blind man on an open plain. You can go nowhere. To have just the correct view but not to meditate is like being a miser; your knowledge is of no benefit to yourself or others. But with both you have two wings to fly to Enlightenment.

To cultivate whichever of the four activities is appropriate and to do so completely free of all (notions of) something to be done and someone to do it is (Mahāmudrā) activity.

> These four are the activity that is all-good, the hidden one, that of being in crowds and that which brings victory in all directions, as explained above.

And to be free of all (notions of) something to be meditated upon and someone to meditate and to have no expectations or worries such as fearing you will fall down into saṁsāra or wishing you would rise up to the attainment of Buddhahood is the (Mahāmudrā) result. When you have realised in this way the meaning of the (Mahāmudrā) view, meditation, activity and result, you should enhance your enthusiastic effort.

Have fervent regard and loving respect for your Gurus, with complete faith, totally putting yourself into it. Turn away from obsessions by freeing yourself from compulsive attraction to saṁsāra and this life. Rely at all times on being mindful not to have any mental wanderings. Have short term plans and execute them straight up and down like a bellows. Whenever such attitudes arise such as wishing to save face or thoughts about this life or the eight worldly feelings, which are all unnecessary, smooth them out. Forcefully cut the rope of your selfish concern for this life. And whatever you develop in meditation, do not be blasé about, but exert effort to cultivate it at all times.

Thus you need always to be mindful and alert. If you learn to read and write, what use are they if you do not practise? If you acquire a precious object and do not take care of it, it will become ruined or lost.

Although there are many differences between a flash experience and an insight, (in general) if the meditator feels there is his own mind (on the one hand and on the other) the object of his meditation, namely blissful, clear, bare non-conceptual Voidness, which he is meditating upon or experiencing, this is a flash experience.

It should be noted that the same technical term is used for flash experiences and the boons. They are steeped with belief in duality and, though beautiful and alluring, are as impermanent as the flowers in a mountain meadow. Insights, on the other hand, are more solid and stable.

If you realise with bare perception and not just presumption that there is no dualism of a meditator and something meditated upon, this is an insight. Therefore having differentiated between a flash experience or boon and an insight, place yourself in a state in which you are not obsessed with these (boons) and do not hold them as being supreme. Then cultivate them with effort at all times. This is important.

Although the boons are not supreme, they are the basis for penetrative insight. Therefore by intensifying and cultivating them with no attachment, insights will definitely follow.

Of the four seals, the seal of activities is the path for those of duller wits. Through it you achieve the powerful attainments of the Desire Realm.

There are many levels of meaning to the four seals. Here the seal of activities, karmamudrā, refers to practising (1) the peaceful actions to pacify sickness and interferences, (2) those to increase your life span, good qualities and merit, (3) those to gain power over the elements and (4) the wrathful ones to eliminate harm, obstacles and hindrances. As a result of these you can gain good health, long life, wealth, power and so forth, which are the powerful attainments of the Desire Realm.

The seal of commitments and that of the Dharma are the paths for those of middling wits. Through them you achieve the ultimate powerful attainments of the highest realm of saṁsāra, Akaniṣṭha Heaven or Wog-min, that which is not beneath anything else.

The seal of commitments, samayamudrā, is the keeping of the vows and commitments of the various Buddha-families. The seal of Dharma, dharmamudrā, is visualising yourself as a meditational deity. To apply these witout the realisation of Voidness can only bring you to the peak of saṁsāra, but not to Enlightenment. You can achieve the common powerful attainments of extra-sensory and physical powers and so forth, but not the supreme one.

But the Great Seal of Voidness (mahāmudrā) is the path for those of sharpest wits. It is the method for achieving the supreme powerful attainment (of Enlightenment).

Therefore by applying all four seals progressively to your practice, you will reach the fully enlightened state of a Buddha.

(Mahāmudrā is) the inseparability of appearance and Voidness, bliss and Voidness, awareness and Voidness, clarity and Voidness, free from all extremes of mentally fabricated modes of existence (that it is truly existent, totally non-existent, both or neither). It is not something that can be shown by a Guru, intellectually understood by a disciple, or made intelligible through words. It is free from all notions that it is this and not that. It is a Great Bliss that is experienced although it cannot be identified (as this or that). There is nothing that it does not pervade, either appearances, existence, saṁsāra or Nirvāṇa. It is the great state beyond the intellect (or the conventional mind). The simultaneity of mind, thought and the Dharmakāya has been the case from beginningless time. But because it is not understood, the Gurus explain with their oral teachings that (these three) must be blended into one as an inseparable unity. This is known as the Mahāmudrā of the simultaneously arisen and merged.

> When you blend the mind, thought and Dharmakāya, it is not like mixing flour and cement, but rather like pouring water into water. The nature of thought is the same as the nature of the mind: they are both Dharmakāya. Thoughts, though deceptive, are not to be abandoned nor should you strive to establish their cessation. By recognising their nature, they become purified and you realise the Dharmakāya and are a Buddha. When you do not understand them, you are deceived about thoughts and are a sentient being.
>
> Thoughts, mind and Dharmakāya have been simultaneous from beginningless time. If you ask which came first, deception or Enlightenment, this is the same as the proverbial question, "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" It is not that first you had Enlightenment and then you became unaware of it, nor is it that first you were unaware and then became enlightened. They are simultaneous and beginningless. Yet, a Buddha has no thought and no deception. What does this mean?
>
> Thought is pervasive with Dharmakāya, therefore you cannot say that a Buddha has abandoned thought, since this would imply he has abandoned Dharmakāya. But since a Buddha recognises thought as the Dharmakāya, thoughts do not arise on his mind-stream and all his activity and manifestations are non-conceptual, spontaneous virtuous conduct without any thought.

From the lineage that has passed from Vajradhāra to Tilopa, Nāropa, Marpa, Mi-la rá-pa and then to Gam-po-pa, the lineage of meditational methods deriving from (direct disciples) of Gam-po-pa are the Mahāmudrās of the Zhang, Ba-rom and Dr'i-k'ung Ka-gyü, this latter being the lineage from P'ag-mo dr'u-pa. (Those deriving from direct disciples of p'ag-mo dr'u-pa are) the Mahāmudrā of the Tag-lung, Chān-nga, mar-ye, Shub-se-wa, Tr'o-p'u, Ya-zang and Drug-pa Ka-gyü, this latter being the lineage from Ling-rä-pa and Gya-rä-pa. But in particular there is the Mahāmudrā of the especially distinguished Kar-ma kam-tsang Ka-gyü which has the undeclined moisture of the breath of the Ḍākinīs and the undeclined warmth of the blessings of the unbroken lineage from Gam-po-pa through (the First Kar-ma-pa) D'ü-sum ky'en-pa down to my Guru (the Fifth Zha-mar Rinpoche) Kön-ch'og yān-lag. It has a lineage that combines into one of the special features of all the many, diffuse Mahāmudrā teachings. Known as the Mahāmudrā of the simultaneously arisen and merged, the source of all good qualities, it is as famous in the world as the sun and the moon. If you practise it conscientiously, it is certain that you will automatically develop experiences and insights. Practising in this way is the seventh point (for enhancing your practice).

Author's Colophon

Without compiling scriptural quotations and so forth, I have explained this by taking as the main thing recognising the nature of the mind, while pointing a finger directly at the practice. Although I have no experience myself, I, Mi-p'am ch'ö-wang or Vajreśvara (the Ninth Kar-ma-pa Wang-ch'ug dor-je, 1556–1603), having borrowed in accordance with the words of the previous Gurus, have written this text in Zho-ka-wor House during my meditation sessions at the insistent request of the Sam-de Lama Rab-jam ma-wa Sam-tän Kün-ga. It has twenty, twenty-two or twenty-five meditation topics.

By the virtue of this may I and all other motherly sentient beings turn sincerely away from obsessive attraction to the desirable objects of the senses and see the nature of the mind. Shubham astu sarvajagatam, may all the world be pure.

This text has been explained with oral commentary by the Third Jam-yang Ky'en-tze wang-po Rinpoche, Kar-ma drub-gyü tān-pa yar-p'el gyur-me g'o-ch'a tr'in-lä kūn-ky'ab päl-za ng-po, in accordance with the teachings of his Guru, His Holiness the Sixteenth Kar-ma-pa, Rang-j'ung rig-päi dor-je. It has been translated into English and compiled by Alexander Berzin, and was taught in Tibetan at Bodh Gaya, India, between December 1976 and January 1977.

Two:

FIFTY STANZAS OF GURU-DEVOTION

("Gurupañcāśikā", "Bla-ma lnga-bcu-pa")

by Āryaśūra
with commentary given orally by
Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey

Preface

"Fifty Stanzas of Guru-devotion" ("Gurupañcāśikā) was written in about the first century B.C. by Aśvaghoṣa. This Indian poet was known by many names, such as Āryaśūra, Mātṛceta, Pātṛceta, Maticitra and Bhavideva, and was a contemporary of King Kaniṣka of the Kuṣan Dynasty. Having previously been a strong non-Buddhist believer, he became an extremely devout follower of the Buddhas' path writing many works on its various aspects.

Śākyamuni Buddha lived about four centuries before Aśvaghoṣa. He taught sūtras dealing with meditative practices for attaining Liberation and Enlightenment and, in the form of Buddha Vajradhāra, Mahāmudrā and the tantras covering speedier, yet more dangerous methods for achieving this latter goal. Success in following either the Sūtrayāna or Tantrayāna path depends solely on your Guru-devotion, for Buddha indicated in the "Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra" (II, 124) and in the "Kye dor Shä-gyü dor-jei g'ur," an explanatory work to the "Ḥevajra Tantra", that in future times of degeneration he would take the form of Gurus. At such times Gurus should be respected the same as the Buddhas, for they will be their living representatives.

Guru-devotion involves both your thoughts and your actions. The most important thing is to develop the total conviction that your Guru is a Buddha. Such a conviction is a prerequisite for receiving any insight. If you are aiming to benefit yourself and overcome all suffering with the attainment of Liberation, or reach the perfected state of a Fully Enlightened Buddha so that you can help liberate others, your Guru can only show you the way if he himself has already achieved these accomplishments. If you doubt your Guru's competence and ability to guide you, your practices will be extremely unstable and you will be unable to make any concrete progress. You must have full confidence that it is possible to become Enlightened, that your Guru is living proof of this, and that by following Buddha's teachings as he instructs, you can achieve the same. Only then will it be possible to gain any benefits from the practices.

Seeing only good qualities in your Guru, therefore, is the way to develop these qualities yourself. Normally most people are blind to their own shortcomings, while the faults of others shine out clearly. But if you did not possess these same faults yourself, you would be unable to recognise them in others. If there are two pieces of fruit, one ripe and one rotten, and the person next to you takes the ripe one, it is only due to your own greed that you accuse him of being greedy and selfish. If you were unattached to the fruit, it would not matter to you which one he took—you would simply see him as having taken a piece of fruit.

Likewise, if you can train yourself to see only good qualities and never any faults in your Guru, this positive outlook will come to pervade, amplify and reflect your own state of mind. As everyone has the basis Mahāmudrā or Buddha-nature within him—the clear, uncontaminated state of pure mind established without any true independent existence—then if you can see your Guru in terms of a Buddha, you have the possibility of activating and realising your own Buddha-nature, that is achieving the resultant Mahāmudrā. If you see only faults, you merely reinforce your own shortcomings and negative attitudes, whereas if you see only perfection, you will be able to attain the perfection of Buddhahood yourself. Therefore one of the main practices of Guru-yoga, particularly in Mahāmudrā and the tantra, is to realise the inseparability of your own mind with your Guru, the Buddhas and your meditational deity, who is a pure form manifestation of the Enlightened mind. Thus

Guru-devotion is the root of all attainments.

If your Guru acts in a seemingly unenlightened manner and you feel it would be hypocritical to think him a Buddha, you should remember that your own opinions are unreliable and the apparent faults you see may only be a reflection of your own deluded state of mind. Also you should think that if your Guru acted in a completely perfect manner, he would be inaccessible and you would be unable to relate to him. It is therefore out of your Guru's great compassion that he may show apparent flaws. This is part of his use of skilful means in order for him to be able to teach you. He is mirroring your own faults; therefore check within and learn from him how to remove your shortcomings. If you are only intent on criticising your Guru, you will never be able to benefit from him.

It was Buddha Vajradhāra himself who said that your Guru is to be seen as a Buddha. Therefore if you have faith and take refuge in the Buddhist teachings, you will try to understand what Buddha meant by this statement. Buddhas exert a great positive influence on the world in the same way as does the sun. But just as a magnifying glass is needed to focus the rays of the sun in order for tinder to catch fire, so too a Guru is required to focus the Buddhas' virtuous conduct into a disciple's mind-stream and inspire him to follow a spiritual path. Thus as living examples representing the Buddhas, Gurus carry on the work of all the Enlightened Beings, acting as an accessible focal point for your practices to gain Buddhahood yourself.

Through devotion to your Guru, showing him respect, sowing him and making offerings, you build up the merit that will allow you to become liberated from all your suffering. Such service is done not to benefit your Guru, but for your own sake. When you plant seeds in a field, it is not to benefit the earth. It is you yourself who will harvest the crops. Therefore with the proper devotional attitude towards your Guru—seeing him as a Buddha—the more positive energy you exert in his direction, the closer you come towards Buddhahood yourself. Likewise, if you hate your Guru and generate negative energy towards him, you are deliberately casting yourself away from his state of Enlightenment and its freedom from pain. As a result you bring intense suffering upon yourself. Therefore if you see faults in your Guru and tend to belittle him, remember your opinions are unreliable and only unhappiness can result from despising the state of happiness he represents.

Remembering your Guru's kindness to teach you during this degenerate age after Śākyamuni Buddha has passed away, you must develop loving respect for him. Your Guru teaches you despite your delusions and does not force you to undergo such hardships as Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa and others have had to endure in the past. He gives you initiations, oral teachings and transmits the unbroken lineages coming from Buddha. He inspires you to attain his state and helps you materially when you need it. If you lack loving respect for your Guru, it is impossible to become Enlightened. If you do not have respect for the state of Buddhahood he represents, how can you attain it?

These various aspects of devoting yourself to your Guru by means of your thoughts are taught extensively in such texts as the "Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra". These points and their scriptural references are found in detail in the "Lam-rim ch-en-mo" by Je Tzong-k'a-pa. The "Gurupañcāśikā"by Aśvaghoṣa is the most comprehensive summary of how to devote yourself to your Guru by means of your actions. Its scriptural sources are a wide range of tantric texts, including the "Guhyasamāja", "Kālacakra", "Cakrasaṁvara", "Vajraḍākinī" and "Vajra-hṛdayālaṁkāra Tantras". The specific tantric sources for each verse are given in the "La-ma nga-chu-pä nam-shä", a commentary on this text also by Je Tzong-k'a-pa.

For the study and practice of tantra, Guru-devotion is even more essential and receives more emphasis than in the sūtra path. This is because the tantric practices are extremely difficult and complicated. If done correctly they can bring you Buddhahood within your lifetime, but if done improperly they may be very dangerous and bring you extremely dire consequences. Therefore the direct personal guidance of a Guru is indispensable. As the "Gurupañcāśikā" outlines specifically how a disciple should act with his Guru, it is the custom to teach this text before giving any tantric empowerment or initiation. Once a Guru-disciple relationship is established, the disciple is taught Guru-devotion and the common path of renunciation of the suffering of saṁsāra, the Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta and the correct view of Voidness (Śūnyatā). Then after receiving the proper empowerments, he can be led gradually through the stages of tantra on the firm foundation of his Guru-devotion and the above "Three Principal Paths".

Text

Homage to the Bhagavān Vajrasattva.

Bhagavān is one of the many epithets used for an Enlightened Being, a Buddha. The Tibetan term for it, "Chom-dän-dä (bCom-ldan 'das)", is etymologised as follows. "Chom" means to overcome. Buddhas have overcome both the obstacles preventing Liberation and those preventing Omniscience. The former include the delusions or moral and mental defilements (kleśa), and the ignorance of grasping for true independent existence, as well as the seeds of all of these. The latter refers to the instincts of both these defilements and this ignorance. "Dän" means to possess. Buddhas possess all good qualities, having completed their accumulations of both merit and insight resulting in their Form and Wisdom Bodies respectively. "Dä" means to pass beyond. Buddhas have passed beyond saṁsāra, the cycle of uncontrolled rebirth with suffering due to karma and delusions.

The hidden meaning of Vajrasattva, Dor-je sem-pa (rDo-rje sems-dpa') in Tibetan, can also be discovered from its etymology. "Dor-je" means indestructible diamond-lightening. Here it refers to the diamond-hard wisdom of the non-duality of Voidness and Bliss, that is the non-duality of (1) the mind that has bare perception of Voidness, experienced with a feeling of Great Bliss and (2) the Voidness that is the object of this mind. "Sem-pa" means the one with a heroic mind. It signifies someone who has himself abandoned all delusions, ignorance and their instincts and has the heroic mind that is ready to help others in all possible ways.

Thus Bhagavān Vajrasattva refers to the state of Vajradhāra, the form Buddha takes in the tantras. As the way to attain his Enlightened state is through Guru-devotion, Aśvaghoṣa begins his work with this homage.

(1)

Bowing in the proper way to the lotus feet of my Guru who is the cause for me to attain the state of a glorious Vajrasattva, I shall condense and explain in brief what has been said in many stainless tantric texts about Guru-devotion. (Therefore) listen with respect.

(2)

All the Buddhas of the past, present and future, residing in every land in the ten directions, have paid homage to the Tantric Masters from whom they have received the highest empowerments. (Is there need to mention that you should too?)

In general there are three types of empowerments or initiations, causal, pathway and resultant. The first is to ripen your mindstream, the second is an actual path of practice through which to gain Enlightenment and the third is into the actual liberated state of Buddhahood. Everyone who ever has or will attain Enlightenment does so through receiving these highest empowerments from their Tantric Masters.

(3)

Three times each day with supreme faith you must show the respect you have for your Guru who teaches you (the Tantric path), by pressing your palms together, offering a mandala as well as flowers and prostrating (touching) your head to his feet.

As a disciple you must regard your Guru as an Enlightened Being. Even if from his own point of view he is not Enlightened and you, his disciple, have gained Buddhahood before him, you must still show him respect and pay homage. For instance, Maitreya, the fifth and next Buddha of the thousand of this world age, who now presides over Tuṣita Buddha-field, became Enlightened before his Guru, Śākyamuni Buddha. To demonstrate respect for his Guru, Maitreya has a stūpa or reliquary monument on his forehead. Likewise Avalokiteśvara, the incarnation of the compassion of all the Buddhas, is crowned in his elevenheaded aspect with the head of his Guru, Amitābha Buddha, the one who presides over Sukhāvatī Buddha-field.

Thus learning from a Guru should not be like killing a deer to extract its musk and then discarding its corpse. Even after attaining Enlightenment you must still continue to honour your Guru who made all your achievements possible.

(4)

> Those who hold ordination vows, if (your Guru) is a layman or your junior, prostrate (in public) while facing such things as his scriptural texts in order to avoid worldly scorn. But in your mind (Prostrate to your Guru).

(5)

> As for serving (your Guru) and showing him respect, such as obeying what he says, standing up (when he comes) and showing him to his seat—these should be done even by those with ordination vows (whose Gurus are laymen or their juniors). But (in public) avoid prostrating and unorthodox actions (such as washing his feet).

One of the ordination rules is that monks and nuns should not prostrate to laymen. This is taken to mean that in public you should not show this type of respect for your lay Guru as it might cause misunderstanding and scorn among those who casually observe. It is better to prostrate facing scriptural texts or Buddha images near him, while directing your reverence in your mind to your Guru.

For example, the great masters Candragomī and Candrakīrti often debated with one another. The former was a layman, the latter a monk. One day Candrakīrti invited Candragomī to his monastery. He wanted all the monks to form a procession, but the lay Master objected that the local townspeople would find it strange. Candrakīrti told him not to worry. He placed a statue of Mañjuśrī on a high throne and in the procession had a monk carry it directly before Candragomī. All the people thought that this ceremony was in honour of Mañjuśrī, the manifestation of the Buddhas' wisdom, and thus the monk avoided any bad feelings.

Although restraint and indirect means of showing respect are often called for out of consideration for others, in private disciple must follow all the proper procedures of Guru-devotion no matter what the status of his Guru may be. However general respect, such as rising when he comes, must be shown at all times.

On his own part, however, a Guru should always be humble never arrogant or pompous thinking himself great and worthy of honour. P'a-ra Rinpoche, one of the most realised disciples of the Senior and Junior Tutors of His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, always kept a scriptural text by his seat. Explaining why, he said that when people would come to visit him and prostrated, at least they would gain some merit from showing respect to the scriptures since he himself had no qualifications.

(6)

> In order for the words of honour of neither the Guru nor the disciple to degenerate, there must be a mutual examination beforehand (to determine if each can) brave a Guru-disciple relationship.

At tantric empowerments many sets of vows are taken never to abandon the practices and procedures essential for spiritual progress. The disciple pledges his word of honour never to transgress these vows, such as always to visualise his Guru as inseparable from the meditational deity into whose practice he has just been initiated. Such deities, as well as the Gurus, share the same Enlightened nature as all the Buddhas, differing only in the physical aspect they manifest.

The Guru, too, has previously pledged his word of honour never to disclose the tantric secrets to those who are unable to understand and keep them. Just as the milk of a lion should not be kept in a clay pot, so the profound and powerful methods of the tantra should not be entrusted to those who are not ready. If, having taken such vows, either the Guru or disciple should allow his word of honour to degenerate, it will be impossible for either to attain any of his goals and very serious unfortunate consequences will follow for both. Therefore it is extremely important for there to be a mutual examination between the Guru and disciple before they enter a formal relationship.

In ancient times in order to receive an empowerment a potential disciple would have to ask over a period of three years. An initiation was not at all something casual. By making the disciple wait so long, a Guru impressed on him the seriousness of entering the tantric path, tested his commitment and ensured that he was properly prepared. Often a Guru would make a disciple wait even longer before agreeing to teach him anything. He would repeatedly test his character and only when he had understood him well would he accept him as his disciple.

The disciple also must test his potential Guru and determine if he is fully qualified. He must be confident that he will be able to devote himself fully to this Master. Before entering a formal Guru-disciple relationship, you have complete freedom of choice. But once such a bond has been established, these teachings on Guru-devotion must be followed with total commitment.

(7)

> A disciple with sense should not accept as his Guru someone who lacks compassion or who is angersome, vicious or arrogant, possessive, undisciplined or boasts of his knowledge.

(8)

> (A Guru should be) stable (in his actions), cultivated (in his spech), wise, patient and honest. He should neither conceal his short-comings nor pretend to possess qualities he lacks. He should be an expert in the meanings (of the tantra) and in its ritual procedures (of medicine and turning back obstacles). Also he should have loving compassion and a complete knowledge of the scriptures.

(9)

> He should have full expertise in both ten fields, skill in the drawing of mandalas, full knowledge of how to explain the tantra, supreme pure faith and his senses fully under control.

In general a Mahāyāna Guru should have the following ten qualities: (1) discipline as a result of his mastery of the training in the higher discipline of moral self-control, (2) mental quiescence from his training in higher concentration, (3) pacification of all delusions and obstacles from his training in higher wisdom, (4) more knowledge than his disciple in the subject to be taught, (5) enthusiastic perseverance and joy in teaching, (6) a treasure of scriptural knowledge, (7) insight into and an understanding of Voidness, (8) skill in presenting the teachings, (9) great compassion and (10) no reluctance to teach and work for his disciples regardless of their level of intelligence.

A Tantric Master must have even more good qualities, as listed in the text. Most important is that he be an extremely stable person, with his body, speech and mind totally under control. He should be someone in whose presence everyone feels calm, peaceful and relaxed. Even the mere sight of him brings great pleasure to the mind. And his compassion must be unsurpassable.

There are two sets of ten fields in which the Guru must be a complete master. The ten inner ones are essential for teaching the yoga and anuttarayoga classes of tantra, which stress the importance of purifying mainly internal mental activities. These are expertise in (1) visualising wheels of protection and eliminating obstacles, (2) preparing and consecrating protection knots and amulets to be worn around the neck, (3) conferring the vase and secret empowerments, planting the seeds for attaining a Buddha's Form Bodies, (4) conferring the wisdom and word empowerments, planting the seeds for attaining a Buddha's Wisdom Bodies, (5) separating the enemies of Dharma from their own protectors, (6) making offerings, such as of sculptured tormas, (7) reciting mantras, both verbally and mentally, that is visualising them revolving around his heart, (8) performing wrathful ritual procedures for forcefully catching the attention of the meditational deities and protectors, (9) consecrating images and statues and (10) making maṇḍala offerings, performing the meditational practices (sadhana) and taking self-initiations.

The ten external qualities are required for teaching the krīya and caryā classes of tantra, which stress the importance of purifying mainly external activities in connection with internal mental processes. These are expertise in (1) drawing, constructing and visualising the mandala abodes of the meditational deities, (2) maintaining the different states of single-minded concentration (samādhi), (3) executing the hand gestures (mudrā), (4) performing the ritual dances, (5) sitting in the full meditational position, (6) reciting what is appropriate to these two classes of tantra, (7) making fire offerings, (8) making the various other offerings, (9) performing the rituals of (a) pacification of disputes, famine and disease, (b) increase of life span, knowledge and wealth, (c) power to influence others and (d) wrathful elimination of demonic forces and interferences, and (10) invoking meditational deities and dissolving them back into their appropriate places.

It is not sufficient for a Tantric Master merely to know how to perform the superficial actions of these above rituals. He must actually be able to do them. For instance, when consecrating an image of a meditational deity, he must be able to invoke the actual deity and place it in the image, not merely recite the words of the accompanying text. If you take as your Guru a Master with all these qualifications and powers, and he accepts you as his disciple, you must devote yourself fully to him. Although it is possible that out of delusion you might disagree with your Guru, never show him disrespect or despise him from the depth of your heart.

(10)

Having become the disciple of such a protecting (Guru), should you then despise him from your heart, you will reap continual suffering as if you had disparaged all the Buddhas.

(11)

If you are so foolish as to despise your Guru, you will contract contagious diseases and those caused by harmful spirits. You will die (a horrible death) caused by demons, plagues or poison.

(12)

You will be killed by (wicked) kings or fire, by poisonous snakes, water, witches or bandits, by harmful spirits or savages, and then be reborn in a hell.

(13)

Never disturb your Guru's mind. Should you be foolish and happen to do this, you will surely boil in a hell.

(14)

Whatever fearful hells have been taught, such as Avīci, the Hell of Uninterrupted Pain, it is clearly explained that those who disparage their Gurus will have to remain there (a very long time).

(15)

Therefore exert yourself whole-heartedly never to belittle your Tantric Master who makes no display of his great wisdom and virtues.

As your Guru is a Buddha, despising him is the same as hating all who are Enlightened. The state of Buddhahood is one of complete Liberation from all suffering, ignorance, delusions and obstacles. It is the attainment of all good qualities, complete perfection and total Omniscience. Despising or belittling such a state by disparaging your Guru, you cast yourself in the opposite direction from happiness and freedom. Having contempt for wisdom and Liberation, you gain instead bondage and pain. Such tormented states are what have been described in all the scriptures as the various hells.

Thus there are great dangers in entering a Guru-disciple relationship. Your Tantric Master may be the one who has given you empowerments, a tantric discourse or even instruction on maṇḍala drawing. As he has no pretension and is never boastful, he will always hide his good qualities and never hesitate to admit shortcomings. If you do not recognise such traits as indications of his perfection, humility and skilful means, you may make the serious mistake of belittling or seeing faults in him. Having established a formal bond with this Guru and through him entered a pathway to Buddhahood, you have then cast yourself into terrible suffering if from the depth of your heart you break this link. Therefore you must have great awareness, for although Guru-devotion will elevate you to Full Enlightenment, a breach of it will be your downfall.

(16)

(If from a lack of awareness you have shown disrespect) to your Guru, reverently present an offering to him and seek his forgiveness. Then in the future such harm as plagues will not befall you.

As a Buddha, a Guru will never hold a grudge, showing him disrespect cannot possibly offend or hurt him. The only one you harm is yourself. Therefore if you repent and beg his forgiveness, he will accept what you offer with great compassion. Then by the force of your faith, respect and devotion, you need not experience great misfortune.

The beneficial effects of Guru-devotion and the dire consequences of a breach of it are not rewards and punishments from a godly Guru. They follow directly from cause and effect. Your Guru is the focal point for your practices leading to Enlightenment. The more devoted you are towards the state of perfection he represents, the closer you come towards this goal. Despising him can only take you further away into darkness and ignorance.

(17)

It has been taught that for the Guru to whom you have pledged your word of honour (to visualise as one with your meditational deity), you should willingly sacrifice your wife, children and even your life, although these are not (easy) to give away. Is there need to mention your fleeting wealth?

(18)

(Such practice of offering) can confer even Buddhahood on a zealous (disciple) in his very lifetime, which otherwise might be difficult to attain even in countless millions of aeons.

(19)

Always keep your word of honour. Always make offerings to the Enlightened Ones. Always make offerings also to your Guru, for he is the same as all the Buddhas.

(20)

Those who wish (to attain) the inexhaustible (state of Buddha's Wisdom Body) should give to their Guru whatever they themselves find pleasing, from the most trifling objects to those of best quality.

(21)

Giving (to your Guru) is the same as making continual offerings to all the Buddhas. From such giving much merit is gathered. From such collection comes the supreme powerful attainment (of Buddhahood).

Making offerings to your Guru as the representative of all the Buddhas is extremely important. Such generosity is symbolic of your total dedication to achieve Buddhahood. If because of miserliness or selfishness you hold back from giving what you find the most pleasing and offer only what you do not want for yourself, how can your promise to give yourself totally for the work of benefiting all sentient beings be anything but a farce? Without any attachment you must be willing to sacrifice everything for your attainment of Enlightenment through your Guru. The offering maṇḍala symbolises this dedication of your body, speech and mind, and even the entire universe for this goal.

If you are poor like Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa, it does not matter that you do not have riches to offer. What is important is your state of mind and willingness to sacrifice anything for the sake of your Guru, Enlightenment and all sentient beings. The best offering, then, is of your practice. But if you have wealth, you must never hesitate to use it for gaining merit.

Therefore making offerings is not so that your Guru can become rich. On his part the Guru should regard such offerings as a tiger would look at grass. The point is to benefit yourself and ultimately everyone else by your total dedication. Great merit is gathered from such practice, resulting in your attainment of the Form Body of a Buddha. If you can see the void nature, that is the lack of true independent existence of yourself, your Guru and what you offer, then you accumulate at the same time the insight that will result in your achievement of a Buddha's Wisdom Body. Thus the supreme powerful attainment of Buddhahood comes from making offerings to your Guru.

(22)

Therefore, a disciple with the good qualities of compassion, generosity, moral self-control and patience

> should never regard as different his Guru and the Buddha Vajradhāra.

Your Guru, the meditational deities and Vajradhāra, the form Buddha assumes in the tantras, are all the same in nature. They are like a single person in a drama changing masks and costumes and playing different roles. The same is true if you have many Gurus. You must regard them all as Buddha, differing only in the face he wears.

The ability to see your Guru as not different from Buddha Vajradhāra depends on your motivation. If you have developed an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta, you are striving to become a Buddha yourself in order to be fully able to benefit others. The stronger this motive, the more the thought of Enlightenment comes to pervade your mind completely. Thinking only of Enlightenment and ways to achieve it, you will automatically be able to see your Guru in terms of this state because nothing else will be in your mind.

The more you wish to attain Enlightenment, the clearer you see the necessity for your Guru to be a Buddha. Thus with the strong compassion of wishing others never to suffer, you can dedicate yourself easily and with joy. Through the practice of the perfections of generosity, the discipline of moral self-control, patience and so forth, all centered around your Guru, you will then be able to attain his state.

(23)

> If you should never tread on even (your Guru's) shadow, because the fearsome consequences are the same as destroying a stūpa, is there need to mention never stepping on or over his shoes or seat, (sitting in his place or riding) his mount?

A stūpa is a monument in which relics of a Buddha are kept. Like your Guru, it serves as a focal point for your veneration and devotion to attaining Buddhahood. Destroying one and stepping on your Guru's shadow, then, are both acts of extreme disregard and disrespect for the state of Enlightenment. Therefore the fearsome consequences of both are the same.

If you treat your Guru's shoes, seat and the horse or vehicle he rides as ordinary objects, and presume to use them yourself or step on them, your arrogant attitude can only become a major hindrance to your attainment of Buddhahood.

(24)

(A disciple) having great sense should obey the words of his Guru joyfully and with enthusiasm. If you lack the knowledge or ability (to do what he says), explain in (polite) words why you cannot (comply).

(25)

It is from your Guru that powerful attainments, higher rebirth and happiness come. Therefore make a wholehearted effort never to transgress your Guru's advice.

Obeying your Guru's orders and following his advice are more important than making countless offerings. Entrusting yourself fully to him, he will guide you along the path to Enlightenment. If with haughty pride and stubborn closed-mindedness you think you know what is best for your own spiritual progress, how will you be able to learn anything from him?

This does not mean that you should become a mindless slave or that your Guru can take undue advantage of you. As you are aiming for the complete freedom of Enlightenment, there must also be freedom in the means of attaining it. You should never follow your Guru's wishes simply because you feel obligated or forced to obey. Rather try to understand his intentions and aim. Your Guru will only tell you to do what is beneficial for yourself and others. What he asks may be difficult and its immediate purpose may not be obvious, but you should receive his advice joyfully and with deep gratitude for his concern with your welfare.

Examine yourself honestly to see if you can follow his wishes. If there is no way in which you can comply, do not be rude or arrogant. Explain politely and with extreme humility what the difficulty is. Your Guru will not be unreasonable; as a Buddha he is filled with great compassion.

If, however, you can avoid transgressing his advice, this is best. Following the spiritual path as he directs, you can attain not only the ordinary powerful attainments (siddhi) of extra-physical and mental powers common to non-Buddhists, but depending on your motivation, a higher rebirth, the happiness of Liberation or the supreme powerful attainment of Buddhahood.

(26)

> (Guard) your Guru's belongings as you would your own life. Treat even your Guru's beloved (family) with the same (respect you show) for him. (Have affectionate regard for) those closely around him as if they were your own dearest kin. Single-mindedly think (in this way) at all times.

Before Drom-tön-pa studied with Atīśa, he served another Guru in K'am. During the day he carried his master's children on his back, spun wool with his hands and softened leather with his feet. At night he tended his animals. He did all this with great joy, and although he was only a layman, Atīśa appointed him to receive all the teachings he brought to Tibet.

When Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa was serving Mar-pa, he would throw himself in the mud and beg his Guru's wife to sit on him while she milked the cows. You must have such respect and devotion for everyone close to your Guru. Remember that he is a Buddha with equal regard and love for all. If you are jealous of his family, attendants or other disciples, if you are possessive of his time and attention, this clearly shows that you do not sincerely believe him to be a Buddha.

(27)

> Never sit on the (same) bed or seat (as your Guru), nor walk ahead of him. (At teachings do not) wear your hair in a top-knot, (a hat, shoes or any weapons. (Never) touch a seat (before he sits down or if he happens to sit on the ground. Do not) place your hands (proudly) on your hips or wring them (before him).

(28)

> Never sit or recline while your Guru is standing (nor lie while he is sitting). Always be ready to stand up and

serve him skilfully in an excellent manner.

(29)

In the presence of your Guru never do such things as spit, (cough or sneeze without covering your head. (Never) stretch out your legs when at your seat, nor walk back and forth (without reason before him. And never) argue.

(30)

Never massage or rub your limbs. Do not sing, dance or play musical instruments (for other than religious purposes). And never chatter idly or speak in excess (or too loudly) within the range of (your Guru's) hearing.

All these examples of improper behaviour are prohibited not because your Guru will be offended: Buddhas cannot be affected by rudeness. It is because you wish to attain his state of perfection, and have great respect for this achievement, that you should not act in a coarse, arrogant or inconsiderate manner.

The customs outlined here are not meant to be unnatural and cruel restrictions. If you are sitting cross-legged at a discourse and this becomes uncomfortable, you are certainly permitted to lift your knees or shift your position. But to sit casually with your feet stretched out towards your Guru reflects a flippant, disrespectful attitude. Receiving a discourse is not like attending a sporting event. It is not for your amusement, but for your attainment of Enlightenment that you are with your Guru. Therefore you must show him great respect and always be alert to his needs and comfort.

(31)

(When your Guru enters the room) get up from your seat and bow your head slightly. Sit (in his presence) respectfully. At night or at rivers or on dangerous paths, with (your Guru's) permission you may walk before him.

(32)

In the direct sight of his Guru, (a disciple) with sense should not (sit) with his body twisted around, nor leaning (causally) against pillars and such. Never crack your knuckles, (play with your fingers or clean your nails).

You must always be considerate of your Guru. As he is the one who will show you the way to complete freedom from all your suffering and how to be able to liberate others, he is more precious than anything else. If he is in danger, you must protect him. Do not sit back idly and proudly as if you owned the entire world.

(33)

When washing (your Guru's) feet or his body, drying, massaging or (shaving) him, precede such actions with (three) prostrations and at their conclusion do the same. Then attend (to yourself) as much as you like.

If you have the opportunity to wash your Guru, shave his head or in any way attend to his comfort, you will be able to gain a great deal of merit. Thus all such actions must be done with the greatest respect. Never selfishly think of your own needs first. Your primary concern is with your Guru and your attainment of his Enlightened state. Only afterwards should you care for yourself.

(34)

Should you need to address (your Guru) by his name, add the title "Your Presence" after it. To generate respect for him in others, further honorifics may also be used.

Once when Je Tzong-k'a-pa was giving a discourse to a few disciples in a retreat house above where Se-ra Monastery later was built, K'ä-dr'ub Je came to meet him for the first time. He asked a nun living nearby where the Venerable Tzong-k'a-pa could be found and she ran off without saying a word. She rinsed her mouth, lit a stick of incense and then replied, "My gracious, venerable Abbot, His Presence Je Tzong-k'a-pa resides over there."

If your Guru's name is Rin-ch'en dor-je, you may refer to him when speaking to others as "my spiritual master, His Presence, the holy, venerable Rin-ch'en dor-je." At least some respectful title must be used. It is extremely crude, arrogant and grating to address, refer to or write about your Guru merely using his personal name. Your Guru is not your childhood playmate, but a Buddha leading you to Enlightenment.

(35)

When asking for your Guru's advice, (first announce why you have come). With palms pressed together at your heart, listen to what he tells you without (letting your mind) wander about. Then (when he has spoken) you should reply, "I shall do exactly as you have said."

(36)

After doing (what your Guru has told you), report (what has happened) in polite, gentle words. Should you yawn or cough, (clear your throat or laugh in his presence), cover your mouth with your hand.

Never waste your Guru's time by coming to him merely for idle chatter. After making prostration three times, announce the purpose of your visit directly. Ask your questions in a straightforward manner, with extreme politeness and humility.

If your Guru gives you advice or asks you to do something, examine yourself to see if you can comply. If you cannot, then excuse yourself and explain why. Do not promise to do something and then go back on your word. The consequences of such disobedience and negligence are very serious. But if you can comply, tell him you will do what he says. Keep him informed of your progress and always report in the end what you have done.

(37)

If you wish to receive a certain teaching, request three times with your palms pressed together while kneeling before him on your (right) knee. (Then at his discourse) sit humbly with respect, wearing appropriate clothing that is neat (and clean, without ornamments, jewellery or cosmetics).

(38)

Whatever you do to serve (your Guru) or show him respect should never be done with an arrogant mind. Instead you should ever be like a newly-wed bride, timid, bashful and very subdued.

(39)

In the presence of (the Guru) who teaches you (the path), stop acting in a conceited, coquettish manner. As for boasting to others what you have done (for your Guru), examine (your conscience) and discard all such acts.

It is improper for a Guru to offer to teach without being specifically requested. He teaches to benefit his disciples, not to display his knowledge. Therefore it is important to make such requests in the proper, formal manner. However, do not try to pressure your Guru into teaching you something too advanced for your level. He will judge when you are ready. Do not haughtily order him to do what you think is best.

When attending his discourse, remember it is not a social event. The only reason you are there is to learn how to attain Enlightenment for the benefit of others. You have not come to show off your wealth or beauty to others, so do not adorn yourself like a peacock. Also be aware and considerate of the social customs of those around you. Never dress in a manner offensive to others that would cause their minds to become disturbed. Be neat, clean and unostentatious, sitting with great respect for your Guru.

When serving your Guru, do not be childish. Whatever service you do or offerings you make are for you to attain Enlightenment through its merit. Do not do such things so that you can boast to others how pious and devoted you are. No merit is to be gained from arrogance. Do not serve your Guru with haughty pride as though you were doing him a great favour. He does not need your help; he is a Buddha. But you need his help very much, for by allowing you to perform small tasks he is giving you a great opportunity to gather merit. Therefore remember his kindness in allowing you to serve him.

Also do not act in a coquettish manner, flirting with your Guru as though you could win his favour in this way. Your Guru is a Buddha with equal loving compassion for all. He will not be impressed by your frivolous behaviour.

(40)

If you are (requested) to perform a consecration, (an initiation into) a maṇḍala or a fire offering ceremony or to gather disciples and deliver a discourse, you may not do so if your Guru resides in that area, unless you receive his prior permission.

(41)

Whatever offerings you receive from performing such rites as (the consecration known as) Opening the Eyes, you should present all these to your Guru. Once he has taken a token portion, you may use the rest for whatever you like.

(42)

In the presence of his Guru a disciple should not act (as a Guru) to his own disciples and they should not act towards him as their Guru. Therefore (before your own Guru) stop (your disciples) from showing you respect such as rising (when you come) and making prostration.

Even when you have become a Guru yourself, you must still practise great devotion to your Guru. If you are requested by your own disciples to give an empowerment, a discourse and so forth, and your own Guru resides in the same area, you should ask him first if he can give this in your place. If your Guru cannot, then only with his approval may you perform such ceremonies yourself.

If your Guru lives far away, you should write to him for permission to accept a disciple or give any teachings. You should not act independently with pride as if you were a great and holy Master, but always in deference to his advice. Especially in the presence of your Guru you must not allow your own disciples to show you respect. You must at all times be humble. Therefore any offerings you receive should be taken to your Guru as a sign of your respect.

He will take a token and then give them back. He has no greed for your offerings, but you must always have him foremeost in your mind.

Once Rä-ch'ung-pa was living in the same town as his Guru, Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa. As he was noted for being very handsome, many devotees came to see him and presented him with a great deal of offerings. He thought, "If I have been given so many offerings, then surely my Guru has received at least three times as much."

He went to his Master and said, "Didn't we receive a lot of offerings today. Let us share them with all the other disciples. But his Guru showed him that all he had been given that day was a piece of meat, a cheese cake and some butter. Rä-ch'ung-pa felt very embarrassed that he had received more offerings than his Guru and told him he would leave town immediately.

He asked permission to go to Lhasa to see the famous Buddha image. Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa replied, "If you see your Guru as a Buddha, what use is it to look at a statue?"

He then asked if he could visit the ancient monastery at Sam-yä. Again his Guru answered, "When looking at the spectacle of your mind, what use is it to see a building?"

A third time he requested to make a pilgrimage to Lho-dr'ag where his Guru's Master, the great translator Mar-pa had lived. His Guru only said, "If you meditate on my Master's teachings, what good is it to see his house?"

Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa told him not to try to do too many things, but to go into meditational retreat in order to gain more confidence in his practice. And this is what Rä-ch'ung-pa did, for he realised that it is not proper for a disciple to receive more respect and offerings than his Guru.

(43)

Whenever you make an offering to your Guru or whenever your Guru presents you with something, a disciple with sense will (present and) receive this using both hands and with his head slightly bent.

(44)

Be diligent in all your actions, (alert and) mindful never to forget (your word of honour). If fellow-disciples transgress, correct each other in a friendly manner.

All disciples who receive tantric empowerment from the same Guru become "vajra" brothers and sisters. You should have great affection and regard among you, helping each other stay on the path. Never be jealous, proud or compete with your fellow-disciples. By correcting each other you please your Guru and everyone benefits. If there is unity and harmony among Dharma friends, this will spread into the lives of others around you.

(45)

If because of sickness you are physically (unable) to bow to your Guru and must do what normally would be prohibited, even without (his explicit) permission, there will be no unfortunate consequences if you have a virtuous mind.

Guru-devotion is not a fanatic practice. If you are ill and your Guru enters the room, you need not stand up and prostrate. If you have something to present, but are too weak to extend your hand, it is permissible even for your Guru to bend down to your bed and receive it. This is not showing disrespect for your Guru, because in your heart you wish to do what is proper but your physical condition prevents you.

However, there are certain things for which there are no exceptions. You must never disturb your Guru's mind, boast, be arrogant or disrespectful no matter what the circumstances.

(46)

What need is there to say much more. Do whatever pleases your Guru and avoid doing anything he would not like. Be diligent in both of these.

(47)

"Powerful attainments follow from (doing what) your Guru (likes)." This has been said by (the Buddha) Vajradhāra himself. Knowing this, try to please your Guru fully with all the actions (of your body, speech and mind).

Everyone wants only happiness and never to experience any suffering. The source of these achievements is your Guru, for he shows you the path to Buddhahood and, by his living example as an Enlightened Being, inspires you to travel this path yourself. If you realise this, you will understand the importance of single-minded Guru-devotion and you will do only what pleases him. As the source of these teachings is the Buddha Vajradhāra, you should put aside all doubts. Follow them with full conviction and you can attain Enlightenment.

What pleases your Guru, then, is your practice leading to Buddhahood. Thus your motivation for pleasing him should be Bodhicitta and your wish to help others. You should not be prompted by worldly desires such as seeking your Guru's praise or fatherly approval. Moreover, if your Guru scolds you, examine your feelings. If you have not intentionally belittled him or sought to annoy him, and if you have not responded to his scolding with anger or accusations that he is unenlightened, then you have not committed a breach of Guru-devotion. In such situations it is totally inappropriate to become depressed, despondent or to feel self-pity and guilt that your Guru does not love you anymore. To do so is an indication of your strong ego-grasping which causes you to take his criticism too personally.

Mar-pa scolded and even beat Je-tzün Mi-la rä-pa many times. This was not because he personally disliked him, but because out of compassion he saw the need for skilful means that were forceful. Thus if your Guru is wrathful with you try to see this as a method he is using to tame your mind and lead you to Enlightenment. As a Buddha, how could he possibly hate you?

(48)

After a disciple has taken refuge in the Triple Gem and developed a pure (Enlightened motive), he should be given this (text) to take to his heart (how to abandon his own arrogant self-will and) follow in his Guru's footsteps (along the Graded Path to Enlightenment).

(49)

(By studying the prerequisite training of Guru-devotion and the Graded Path, common to both the sūtra and

tantra), you will become a (suitable) vessel (to hold) the pure Dharma. You may then be given such teachings as tantra. After receiving the proper empowerments, recite out loud the fourteen root vows and take them sincerely to your heart.

If as a disciple you have pure thoughts to benefit others, are humble, not arrogant or selfish and have no rough manners, your Guru will first teach you what it means to take refuge. He will demonstrate the stability, direction and meaning your life can be given by going for protection from all your suffering and confusion to the Triple Gem of the Buddhas, their teachings of Dharma and the Sangha community of those who realise them. He will then guide you gradually through the Three Principal Paths of renunciation, an Enlightened Motive of Bodhicitta and a correct understanding of Voidness. On the firm foundation of your refuge and Bodhicitta vows, you can then be given these detailed teachings on Guru-devotion.

This text was written to be recited daily so that disciples will not forget the important points of how to conduct themselves with their Guru. When your Master has prepared you in this way for the tantric teachings, and you have become a suitable vessel, then it is proper for him to initiate you. He will then explain the tantric vows and you must be sure never to transgress them. Buddha Vajradhāra has promised that even if you do no meditation but keep purely for sixteen lifetimes the root tantric vows, you will thereby accumulate enough merit and eliminate sufficient obstacles to attain Enlightenment.

After receiving initiations, you will be empowered to follow the complete tantric path as your Guru directs you through the development and completing stages. Your success will depend on your Guru-devotion and the purity of keeping all the vows. Thus proper devotion to your Guru in accordance with these teachings is essential throughout the path to the Enlightened state of non-duality with your Guru-Buddha-meditational deity.

(50)

As I have not made the mistake when writing this work (of adding my personal interpretation), may this

> be of infinite benefit to all disciples who would follow their Guru. By limitless merit I have gathered in this way, may all sentient beings quickly attain the state of Buddha.

This concludes the 'Fifty Stanzas of Guru-devotion' by the great Master Aśvaghoṣa. It has been requested and translated (into Tibetan) by the monk translator, the great editor Rin-ch'en zang-po, together with the Indian Abbot Padmakaravarma.

Index

Abhidharma, 14
"Abhisamayālaṁkra", 124
activities, 21, 40, 41, 46, 47, 58, 102, 120, 137, 155
activity bringing victory over all directions, 103
activity of being in crowds, 103
activity that is all good, 102
Adamantine Body, 133
Akaniṣṭha Heaven, 139
anger, 26, 69, 70, 122, 170
animal, 8, 24, 27, 30, 31
anti-god, 27, 28,
anuttarayoga tantra, 39, 40, 50, 121
appearance, 71, 72, 86-90, 92, 103, 106, 109, 127, 128, 130, 132, 133, 139
arising, ceasing and enduring, 93
Ārya, 16, 28, 120, 132
Asaṅga, 55
attachment, 103
Avalokiteśvara, 7, 151

bardo in-between state, 50, 51
bare non-conceptuality, 68, 81, 93, 108, 112, 124-26
bare perception, 16, 28, 71, 90, 104, 112, 124, 138
black, red and white experiences, 129
blank-mindedness, 40, 50
blessings, 15, 94, 107
bliss, 39, 55, 59, 60, 68, 81, 90, 93, 108, 110, 122, 124-127, 139, 150
Bodh Gaya, 87, 134, 142
Bodhicitta, 1, 5, 6, 11, 14, 28, 29, 60, 61, 77, 100, 101, 103, 105, 123, 131, 149, 160, 171
    cf. Enlightened Motive
Bodhisattva, 7, 8, 16, 17, 104, 107, 118, 120, 124, 125, 127, 129-132, 136
body and mind, 73
Body of Pristine Awareness, 133
body, speech and mind, 19, 24, 43, 99, 133, 159, 169
boredom, 43, 45
Brahma, 27
breath, 53
Buddha, 1, 6, 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 33, 34, 42, 61, 101, 104, 108, 111, 119, 123, 124, 131-34, 139, 140, 145-48, 150, 152, 157-72
Buddha-nature, 66, 93, 136, 146
causal condition, 32
central energy-channel, 39, 40, 54
clarity, 8, 39, 43, 45, 47-49, 55, 59, 60, 68, 72, 75, 77, 79-82, 85, 86, 90, 92, 101, 108, 110, 120, 122, 124-26, 139
Clear Light, 50, 81, 102, 122, 129, 131, 132; mother and child, 131, 132
closed-mindedness, 26, 69, 122, 161
colour, 15, 42, 47, 48, 65, 68, 75, 79, 119
compassion, 1, 6, 8, 14, 100, 117, 118, 123, 154, 155, 158-61, 167, 170
completing stage, 19, 39, 101, 102, 121, 171; without signs, 19; with signs, 121
compulsive grasping at ordinary appearances, 101
conceptual thought, 40, 46, 57, 81, 84
conditioned phenomena, 21, 68, 112
creative energies, 121
cyclic existence, 5, 21, 26, 27, 59, 81, 99, 127, 128

Ḍāka, 7, 17
Ḍākiṇī, 7, 17, 141
danger points, 115, 120, 122
death, 5, 21, 22 27, 28, 30, 50, 61, 87, 99, 100, 107, 123, 129
death process, 50

delusions, 2, 18, 26, 40, 69, 103, 108, 111, 115, 116, 120, 121, 124, 127, 148, 150, 155-57
demonic impulses of Māra, 103
desire, 26, 28, 60, 69, 115, 122, 123, 124
Desire Realm, 24, 28, 60, 110, 138, 139
development stage, 19, 101, 102, 112, 171
diet, 47, 48
disciple, 34, 60, 67, 70, 77, 78, 132, 139, 149, 151, 153-61, 164, 167-69, 171
discriminating wisdom, 130
Dharma, 1, 6-8, 13, 18, 21, 22, 30, 31, 81, 95, 118, 124, 133, 134, 139, 155, 169, 171
Dharma jargon, 66, 67, 78
Dharmakāya, 16, 18, 19, 23, 50, 85, 89, 90, 93, 94, 104, 108, 111, 115, 120, 121, 129, 131-33, 140
Dharmapāla, 7, 17
drawing on water, 91, 127
dreams, 59, 87, 99, 102, 122, 123, 129
Dzog-chen, 125

eight composing mental faculties, 55
eight worldly feelings, 61, 66
eliminating interference, 105
Emanation Body, 19, 108
cf. Nirmānakāya
empowerment, 19, 153, 155
energy-winds, 32, 39, 40, 41, 48, 50, 53, 101, 121, 129
Enlightened Motive, 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 16, 18, 28, 29, 60, 77, 100, 149, 160, 170, 171
Enlightenment, 1, 13, 20, 26, 28-30, 34, 60, 61, 66, 67, 80, 100, 103, 105, 118, 123-26, 131, 133, 134, 137, 139, 140 145, 148, 151, 152, 157-61, 163, 165, 166, 170, 171
enthusiastic perseverance, 55, 56, 60, 105, 130, 155
equal factor of saṁsāra and Nirvāṇa, 93
equipoise, 39, 55, 57, 65
equipoise meditation posture, 41
essential posture, 39, 41, 108
expectations and worries, 35, 51, 57, 77, 85, 92, 109, 119, 137
extra-sensory perception, 59
extreme modes of existence, 9, 19, 68, 92, 100, 115, 120, 126, 130
extreme affirmation, 100
extreme of nihilism,83

feelings, 34, 73, 88, 107, 170
field of merit, 7, 13, 14
five certainties, 132
five deterrents to concentration, 55
five distorted views, 105-109
five extra-sensory eyes, 124
five paths, 103, 124, 125
five types of incorrect grasping, 2
flash experience, 67, 81, 126, 138
foggy-mindedness, 40, 42, 58, 119
Form Body, 131, 132, 155, 159
Form Realm, 24, 28, 60, 110
Formless Realm, 24, 28, 60, 110
four activities, 99, 104, 137
four immeasurables, 8
four methods of being born, 28
Four Noble Truths, 40, 111
four opponent powers, 11
four places where you can lose Voidness, 110-114, 122
four seals, 138
four types of attention, 55
free from mental fabrication, 68, 92, 93, 126, 127, 130

Gam-po-pa, 17, 125, 140, 141
god, 24, 26, 28, 60, 132, 134
grasping at blankness, 130
grasping at true existence, 126, 150
grasping at Voidness, 116, 127
Great Bliss, 18, 92, 93, 139, 150
Guhyasamāja, 101, 148
Guru, 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12-14, 17-19, 33, 54, 60, 66, 67, 70, 76-78, 80, 82, 85, 94, 101, 104, 107, 108, 113, 120, 124, 133, 139, 141, 142, 145-49, 151-72
Guru-devotion, 143, 145, 149, 150,

151, 154, 157, 158, 170, 171
Guru-yoga, 5, 17-20, 101, 124

habit, 121
hearing, thinking and meditating, 107
hell creature, 24, 27, 28, 87, 90, 117
here and now, 9, 41, 50, 89, 93, 127, 128
Heruka, 10, 101, 103, 104
Hināyāna, 28, 103, 111
human, 5, 27, 28, 30, 94
hungry ghost, 8, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30

ignorance, 30, 66, 120, 150, 157, 158
immediate condition, 35
impermanence, 5, 21, 22, 30, 32, 75, 99, 100, 115, 123
Indra, 27, 132, 134
inferential understanding of Voidness, 113
Inseparability of mind and appearance, 71, 86
instantaneous Enlightenment, 105, 106
intellectual understanding, 66, 78, 79, 94, 117
intellectually formulated analysis of Voidness, 115
intellectually formulated Voidness, 110, 112
Interrogating a thought, 70

jading the disciple, 79
jealousy, 25, 26, 69, 107, 120
"Jewel Ornament of Liberation", 125
judgments, 45

Ka-gyü, 1, 5, 6, 141
Kālacakra, 101, 148
Kamalaśīla, 55
Karma, 5, 7, 15, 16, 22, 24, 26, 30, 112, 123, 150
Karmapa, 17, 18, 141, 142; The first, 18, 141; The Ninth, 142; The Sixteenth, 142

laziness, 30, 60, 77
Liberation, 15, 28, 67, 93, 107, 111, 128, 134, 145, 150, 157, 162
liberation through seeing, 134
love, 8, 61, 100, 123, 162, 170

Madhyamaka, 93
Mahākāla, 7
Mahāmudrā, 1, 5, 19, 20, 35, 92, 93, 94, 99, 101, 102, 104, 106, 112, 113, 114, 117, 118, 120, 123, 125, 129, 136, 137, 139, 140, 141, 145, 146
Mahāsiddha, 104
Mahāyāna, 103, 126, 132, 154
main condition, 33
Maitreya, 124, 151
maṇḍala mansion, 13
maṇḍala offering, 5, 6, 13, 14, 16, 155
mantra, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 101, 102, 112, 123, 155
meditation session, 8, 43, 57, 99, 104
meditation deities, 6, 7, 13, 14, 17, 101, 103, 107, 112, 139, 146, 153, 156, 158, 159, 171
meditative posture of Vairocana, 39
mental agitation, 47, 48, 54, 58, 81, 83, 120
mental chatter, 42, 46
mental dullness, 40, 41, 47, 48, 54, 58, 81, 83, 119, 120
mental grip, 56, 57
mental labelling, 34
mental looseness, 56, 57
mental quiescence, 39, 40, 45, 47, 49, 51, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 65, 76, 80, 81, 93, 95, 102, 103, 124, 125, 126, 129, 154
mental tightness, 56, 57
mental wandering, 22, 51, 53, 57, 58, 65, 80, 81, 99, 103, 137
merit, 5, 6, 8, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 30, 106, 112, 124, 134, 147, 150, 153, 159, 164, 166, 171
Mi-la-rä-pa, 17, 23, 60, 61, 87, 140, 148, 159, 162, 168, 170
mind-only, 93
mind-stream, 1, 8, 19, 27, 59, 94, 95, 111, 121, 140, 147, 151

mindfulness, 45, 51, 57, 60, 65, 77, 99
mind reflecting appearances, 71, 90
mirror, 52, 58, 65, 72, 76, 106, 132
mirror-like pristine awareness, 131
mixture of everything with Mahāmudrā, 102
motivation, 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 14, 28, 61, 103, 105, 132, 160, 162, 170
moving mind, 68, 70, 75, 77, 83, 91, 94, 108
Mount Meru, 14, 15, 58, 71
mystic leap of faith, 113

Nāgārjuna, 21, 116
Nāropa, 14, 104, 113, 122, 140
nature of the mind, 65, 67, 78, 79, 80, 82, 85, 86, 90, 91, 94, 95, 107, 126, 132
Nature Body, 108
nervousness, 54
nine stages of settling the mind, 55
Nirmānakāya, 15, 18, 19, 108, 120, 121, 132, 133
non-Buddhists, 59
non-conceptual state, 41, 55, 57, 81, 83, 84, 85
non-duality, 93, 150, 171
non-objectifying state, 8, 15, 20
non-virtuous actions, 6, 11, 19, 24, 25, 26, 47, 116, 123

objective condition, 34
obstacles, 5, 6, 11, 12, 19, 28, 40, 42, 104, 131, 139, 150, 154, 155, 171
offerings, 10, 13, 14, 15, 18, 155, 158, 159, 161, 166, 167, 168
Omniscient mind, 16
oral explanation, 80

pain, 7, 80, 120, 157
path of accumulation, 103, 126
path of meditation, 104, 120
path of no more learning, 104
path of preparation, 103, 126
path of seeing, 103, 104, 117, 126, 127
penetrative insight, 39, 59, 60, 65, 67, 70, 74, 76, 77, 79, 81, 82, 83, 85, 90, 94, 95, 102, 103, 124, 138
physical exercise, 48
play of the mind, 42, 52
polite affectation, 61, 66
post-meditational period, 120, 127, 130
Pratyekabuddha, 7
prayer, 18, 118, 127, 130, 134
precious human rebirth, 5, 30, 31
preliminary practices, 5, 9, 12, 16, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35, 123, 135
presumptive understanding of Voidness, 113
pride, 2, 26, 69, 107, 120, 161, 166
pristine awareness, 7, 39, 81, 84, 93, 101, 106, 107, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133
pristine awareness of simultaneity, 81
prostration, 5, 6, 7, 8, 14, 54, 56, 164, 165, 167
psychic heat, 122
pure-land Buddha-field, 132
purification, 5, 10, 11

rebirth, 5, 7, 22, 23, 25, 28, 31, 50, 60, 100, 107, 116, 123, 124, 127, 150, 161
refuge, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 18, 170, 171
relaxing, 56
renunciation, 27, 28, 32, 123, 133, 149, 171
root of all good qualities, 81

Saṁbhogakāya, 15, 18, 19, 108, 120, 121, 132, 133
saṁsāra, 1, 5, 21, 27, 28, 29, 32, 59, 60, 66, 81, 82, 93, 94, 99, 100, 106, 109, 123, 128, 132, 133, 137, 139, 149, 150
  cf. cyclic existence
Sāngha, 6, 7, 13, 18, 171
Śāntideva, 30, 120
Śāriputra, 7
Scriptural texts, 7, 152, 153
seal of activities, 138
seal of commitments, 139
secret activity, 102

sectarian, 34
sensory objects, 45, 60
sensory pleasures, 22
sentient beings, 1, 6, 7, 8, 12, 15, 18, 21, 27, 29, 30, 100, 104, 132, 133, 140, 142, 159, 172
settled mind, 65, 75, 76, 78, 79, 82, 83, 84, 91, 108
seven limbs of prayer, 18
shape, 42, 65, 68, 75, 79, 81, 83, 119
single-minded concentration, 39, 40, 41, 58, 59, 99, 108, 116, 119, 124, 125, 155
simultaneity of the two levels of truth, 100
six conglomerates, 89
six mental powers, 55
six realms, 26
six stains to be removed, 2
"Six Yogas of Naropa", 40, 113, 122
smell, 22, 45, 71, 72, 86
solid experience, 67
sound, 22, 45, 72, 86
space, 7, 15, 18, 32, 41, 47, 71, 85, 108, 113, 129, 133
spontaneous arisal, 94
Śrāvaka, 7
stage of a single taste, 127, 128, 129, 130
stage of no more meditation, 131, 135
stage of single-pointedness, 125, 126, 129
state free from mental fabrication, 126
subtle energy system, 19
suffering, 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28, 59, 66, 67, 100, 107, 117, 119, 134, 145, 147, 149, 157, 164, 170, 171
superstition, 87, 102, 104
sūtra, 132, 145, 148, 149, 170

tantra, 2, 7, 39, 40, 50, 93, 107, 121, 125, 133, 145, 149, 150, 154, 155, 156, 160, 171
Tārā, 7
taste, 45, 71, 72, 128, 129
ten Bodhisattva stages, 104, 125, 130
ten especially virtuous actions, 25
ten merely virtuous actions, 25
ten non-virtuous actions, 24, 25
ten perfections, 130
ten signs of single-minded concentration, 59
"The Three Baskets", 7
Third K'am-trül Rinpoche, 129
those for whom it happens at once, 76
those who progress gradually, 77
those who skip ahead, 76, 124
thought, 50, 51, 54, 57, 59, 68, 69, 70, 75, 76, 80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 91, 105, 110, 114, 115, 116, 121, 123, 125, 127, 132, 134, 137, 140, 145, 148, 171; coarse, 53, 54, 56; subtle, 53, 56
three boons, 58, 59, 110
three faults along the analogy of a vessel, 2
three places where you can deviate, 110-14, 122
Three-Precious Gems, 18
Three Realms, 28, 59, 110, 123, 127
three skills, 105-9
three stages of settling the mind, 53-55
"Tibetan Book of the Dead", 107
tightening, 56, 57
Tilopa, 14, 104, 140
time, 107, 151, 162, 165, 167, 168
touch, 45
train of thought, 41, 42, 68
tree of assembled Gurus, 7
twelve links of interdependent origination, 28
twelve yogas, 125, 129
two collections, 15
two purities, 136

unity of clarity and Voidness, 81, 85, 86, 92
unity of Voidness and appearance, 90
universal cakra-emperor, 27
universe, 13, 14, 159

unripened unfortunate consequences, 10, 11, 12, 123
Utility Body, 15, 108, 132
  cf. Saṁbhogakāya

Vairocana, 39, 40, 41
Vajradhāra, 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 13, 14, 17, 101, 140, 145, 147, 150, 160, 169, 170, 171
vajra-position, 39, 41
Vajrasattva meditation, 6, 10, 12
Vajrayāna, 1, 93
Vajrayoginī, 6, 17
vase-breathing, 53, 54
virtuous actions, 24, 25, 26, 112
virtuous conduct, 101, 133, 134, 147
visualisation, 6, 14, 40, 47, 80, 101
visual object, 42, 43, 45
Voidness, 1, 8, 15, 16, 18, 20, 28, 60, 72, 75, 76, 79, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 100, 101, 102, 104, 106, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 117, 118, 120, 121, 122, 124, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 138, 139, 149, 150, 155, 171
way of looking, 47, 65, 68
Wisdom Body, 15, 16, 132, 150, 158, 159
  cf. Dharmakāya
Wisdom Truth Body, 16

yidam, 6, 7, 101
  cf. meditational deity

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TITLE The Mahamudra

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महेन्द्र संस्कृत विश्वविद्यालय
वाल्मीकि विद्यापीठ
पुस्तकालय

Mahamudra, or the Great Seal, refers to a Mahayana Buddhis system of meditation on the nature of the mind and is undertake for realising Enlightenment. Taught by Buddha manifesting in the form of Vajradhara, its lineage was passed in India from Tilopa to Naropa to Marpa, and then in Tibet to Mi-la ra-pa and Gam-po-pa, author of "The Jewel Ornament of Liberation". The specific lineage represented here is that of the Kar-ma Ka-gyu which passed from Gam-po-pa to the First Kar-ma-pa and then through successive Gurus until the present day.

This text by the Ninth Kar-ma-pa (1556–1603) is one of the most famous expositions of this meditational system. It covers both the preliminary practices as well as the actual Mahamudra meditations of mental quiescence (samatha) and penetrative insight (vipasyana). Explaining the stages and paths as travelled in this system, it represents a complete path to Enlightenment.

Accompanying the root text is a commentary given orally by Beru Khyentze Rinpoche, based on the teachings of his Guru, His Holiness the Sixteenth Kar-ma-pa, present head of the Kar-ma Ka-gyu Tradition.

As a proper relation with a Guru is essential for realising Mahamudra, also included is the basic text on Guru-devotion by the first century B.C. Indian master Asvaghosa with an oral commentary by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey.

This work is published under the auspices of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in a programme to make available living teachings from the many traditions of Buddhism as preserved in Tibet.

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